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Sleazy Ed Meese, by TRB

JOHN BRADEMAS • C. VANN WOODWARD ON REAGAN • STANISLAW BARANCZAK

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Race

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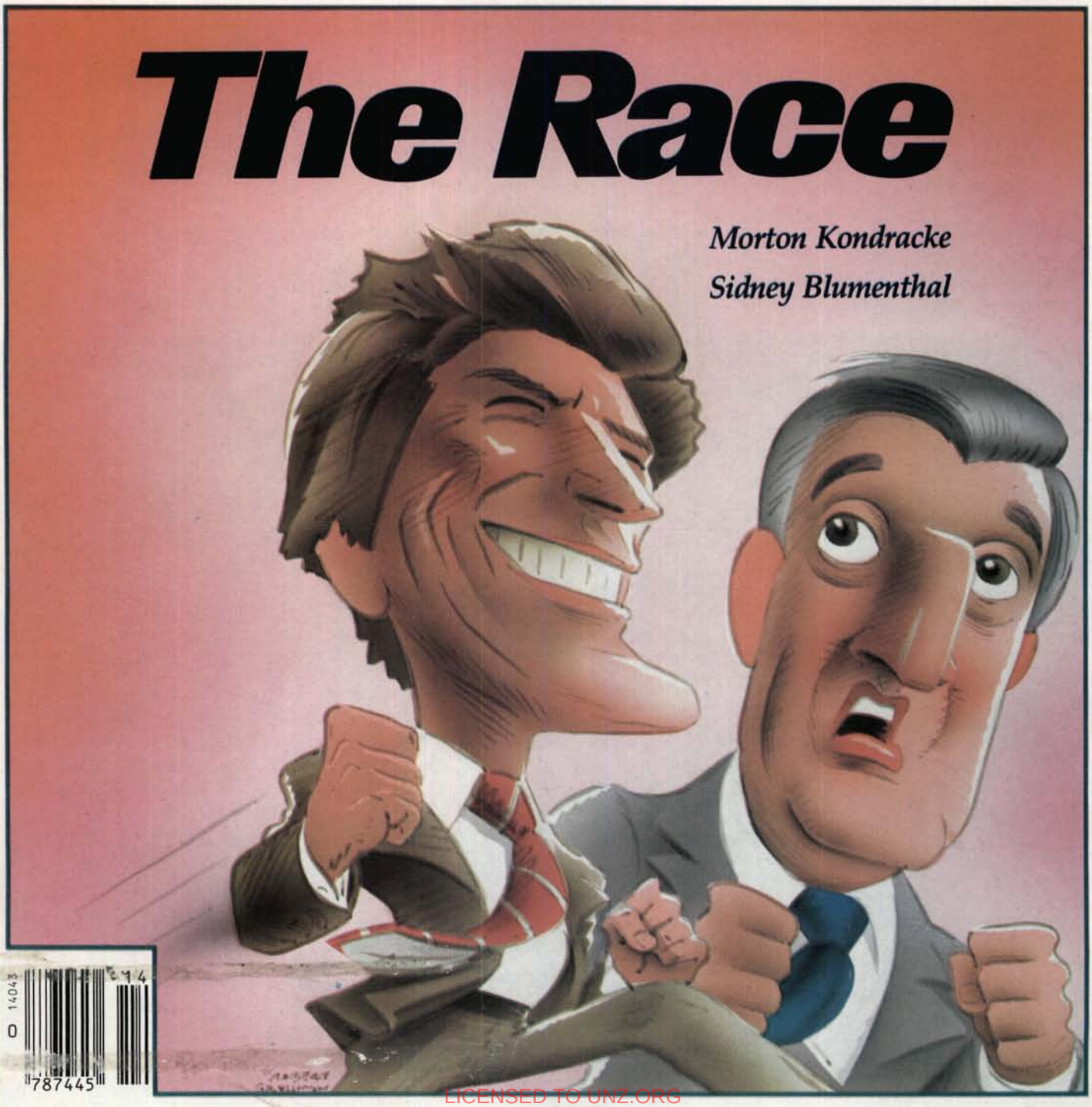

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CORRESPONDENCE

SPINAL GAP

To the editors:

The editors suggest that the American people's desire to withdraw from Lebanon indicates "spinelessness" ("Who Lost Lebanon?" TNR, February 20). Indeed, the public does hesitate to wage war in the wake of Vietnam. A key parallel between Vietnam and Lebanon is the lack of clear-cut political and military objectives. Americans will no longer risk their lives to attain ambiguous goals. The Koreans and Vietnamese have forced us to consider that the passions of fighters are as vital as strength and size in waging war. What would motivate the average American to fight for United States' interests in Lebanon's political quagmire?

Mr. Reagan's restrained response to public pressure is a textbook example of democracy in action. The American people say "no" to further involvement. If the President defies them too blatantly, the people will say "no" to Mr. Reagan in November. After all, he is our representative, not our ruler.

CRISTOPHER RAEL
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

I'm puzzled by the haste TNR's editors have displayed to blame everyone possible for the debacle of Ronald Reagan's policy in Lebanon except Ronald Reagan. Insofar as the American mission in Lebanon was, or seemed to be, an extension of what the Israelis undertook in their incursion into Lebanon in 1982, your past support of it was at least consistent. But now? Whatever opportunities Operation Peace in Galilee opened up have been completely squandered by the President's innocence of world realities and his desire to curry favor with the Arabs.

The only hopeful development in the whole long, sad, and ironic story is the renewed U.S.-Israeli military relationship announced late last year. It appears that after three years Mr. Reagan has at last tired of being left in the lurch by King Hussein and the Saudis. Evidently TNR supports our slow-learner President in this slow learning process because its editors fear even greater irresoluteness from Democrats. But in a world where superpowers confront each other via proxies, there is no need for American troops to be wasted doing badly—or not doing at all—what our surrogate Israel does so well.

STEVEN HELMLING
Newark, Delaware

COLLUSION ILLUSION

To the editors:

Robert B. Reich's "Collusion Course" (TNR, February 27) omits the most significant problem of the auto industry in the United States (and various other old-line industries)—namely grossly uncompetitive labor costs, with hourly rates (including fringe benefits) 40-50 percent higher than Japan's.

The marketplace has an answer to this, of course: the relative decline of

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FROM WASHINGTON

MEESE-EN-SCÈNE

If Edwin Meese III is confirmed as Attorney General, a clever friend says, he'll have Gary Hart to thank. Hart is the only reason Washington hasn't been paying much attention to the complicated but fascinating story of Meese's finances, as told by Senator Howard Metzenbaum of the Judiciary Committee.

People are treating this as a bit of a yawn: just old Howard's inflamed self-righteous streak acting up again. Why doesn't he pick on someone in his own tax bracket? (Metzenbaum's a multi-millionaire.) But if this were August of a nonelection year, Meese would be longing to slink quietly out of town by now. "Hounding," the usual epithet, is a fair description of what often goes on when the news-starved media dogs are set loose on some hapless politico. In this case, though, the self-restraint has been remarkable.

Meese is bound to be a terrible Attorney General, if what you like in an Attorney General is some kind of passion for justice. But the argument that he's not qualified for the job founders on three simple words: William French Smith. There goes one of the all-time lightweights. I once worked briefly as a very junior associate at Smith's law firm, and suffice it to say that we didn't see much of him around the law library. Smith is a "rainmaker"—someone who brings in clients rather than practicing law, let alone thinking about it. Meese, by contrast, was a prosecutor and then a law professor. He is known to have thought hard about the issues an Attorney General faces. Many of his thoughts are unappealing, but that's neither here nor there.

If Meese has more thoughts than Smith, though, Smith has more money than Meese. (Ain't it the way.) At heart, Meese's is the saga of a man socializing above his station, a normal American among the Reaganites. At one point in 1982, with a $60,000 salary, he owed $498,000 in the form of five mortgages plus two unsecured promissory notes—and a $15,000 loan from a friend to his wife. Meese's defenders point out that he was carrying two houses at the time, having been unable to unload his California place after moving to Washington. But this doesn't explain it. The two houses were worth about $540,000, meaning that after his debts he had less than $45,000 in equity. Not much for a man who bought into the California realty boom near the beginning. Clearly Meese was borrowing to live beyond his means.

Ordinarily your banker will take a paternal interest in preventing you from doing this. But Meese was not so fortunate in Gordon Luce, a major Reagan fund-raiser and chairman of the Great American Savings and Loan of San Diego, which ultimately held all five of Meese's mortgages. In May 1982, at a time when Meese already had missed thirty-four payments on three earlier loans, that Great American S&L patriotically gave him a fourth mortgage. No points, no closing costs, no muss, no fuss. "I didn't have any special consideration," Meese told the Judiciary Committee. Great American would have the done the same for anyone. What a wonderful country Mr. Meese lives in.

Meese finally unloaded his California house on September 1, 1982, for $307,500. The question of who bought it is a bit murky. The instigator of the sale was Thomas J. Barrack Jr., a California real estate developer who heard of Meese's difficulties from friends in the White House. Barrack loaned $70,000 to another friend named Ted Elkin, who was unemployed and looking for an "investment opportunity." (Why aren't all the unemployed this resourceful?) Elkin used the money for the down payment on Meese's house. The balance came from a mortgage taken out by a business associate of Barrack's named Irv Howard. Who supplied the mortgage? Can't you guess? Great American Savings & Loan, which gave Howard, a perfect stranger, an 11 percent loan, with no credit check, at a time when the prevailing rate was more like 14 percent.

On March 1, Meese told the Senate Judiciary Committee that the Howard sweetheart loan was "totally separated from any knowledge on my part"—meaning, I guess, that he didn't know about it. On March 2, Metzenbaum produced notes from a phone call between Meese and Barrack, showing that he knew the numbers in detail.

As an "investment opportunity," Château Meese was found wanting. Howard says his son and Elkin planned to build another house on the lot. But it turned out that the zoning forbids this (something less patriotic investors might have inquired about *before* plunking down $307,500). So they sold the house eight months later for $275,000—a $32,500 loss (plus thousands more in mortgage payments). But Barrack forgave the $70,000 he'd put in, so Howard and Elkin did O.K. As did Meese, who got rid of his house for $32,500 more than it was apparently worth. As did Barrack, who was in Washington within two weeks talking about a subcabinet-level appointment. As did Luce, the Great American, who within those same two weeks was appointed to the largely honorary post of alternate delegate to the United Nations. America, America. Thy bounty knowest no end.

Now. Have I mentioned John McKean? He was a California "tax adviser." In June 1981, he arranged a $40,000 loan to Meese from a "pool of private investors." Shortly thereafter, he arranged a $60,000 loan for another White House aide, Michael Deaver, so that Deaver could buy into a tax shelter deal (of the sort the Reagan tax cut was supposed to make otiose). In December, it was another $20,000 for Meese. In November, McKean was appointed to the board of governors of the United States Postal Service. Now he's chairman.

The "pool of private investors" (this is my favorite bit) turned out to consist of one Abe Kupperberg, who'd given some money to his son Clifford, a partner of McKean's, to invest on his behalf; and the Dillon Hawaiian Pension Trust, a freight company pension fund similarly entrusted to the patriotic younger Kupperberg. Sadly, no fancy appointments materialized for Kupperberg Senior or for the Hawaiian freight workers.

And what an investment! The terms apparently were that Meese would pay no principal or interest until word of the loans leaked into *The Washington Post*, which did not happen for two

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 2, 1984

WHEN SALVADOR VOTES

The government of El Salvador will hold elections on March 25 to elect a new president. A campaign is in full swing—and in the middle of a civil war. It is impossible not to admire the stubborn Salvadoran desire for democracy. But that is not all. There are stubborn Salvadoran desires for tyranny, too; and these desires are more in keeping with the facts of Salvadoran life. The forthcoming elections, then, pose a difficult problem, particularly for policymakers on both sides of the aisle in Washington who seek to make sense of the American role. What do elections in a place like El Salvador mean?

It would be naive in the extreme to conclude that they mean democracy, nothing less—as President Reagan seems to think. Or that there exists in El Salvador a political system that may be compared in its measure of morality and freedom to our own. For a start, there is the civil war. The Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, in an effort to sell themselves as a respectable political force, have pledged not to disrupt the elections as they tried to do in 1982, but they cannot control a murderous splinter group in their ranks that has vowed to. The military continues slowly to lose ground to the guerrillas, who are confounding a great many predictions of doom. Despite the brave efforts of many officers, some portion of the military is still at war not only with guerrillas but with many sectors of Salvadoran society as well. The murderous right-wing death squads, which overlap with some military units without being identical with them, continue to brush off the Reagan Administration's pleas that they cease killing so many innocent people. They have been active this month, first issuing a blanket death threat to journalists "who distort reality," then spraying the publicity office of the Christian Democratic presidential candidate, José Napoleón Duarte, with submachine-gun fire.

All this means that the exercise of elections will require great courage on the part of candidates, who can be murdered for their convictions, and on the part of voters, who can be murdered for theirs; it should put our own complacency about electoral processes to shame. All this also means that while the political condition of El Salvador may be modified by elections, it cannot be fundamentally changed. The reasons are worth pondering.

The situation in El Salvador, briefly put, is this: a democratic ritual will be performed in an undemocratic reality. The intimidation of every aspect of Salvadoran life by the violent elements places a severe limitation upon what a free vote can accomplish. The issue is the location of power. In El Salvador, power is located much more in the military sphere than in the political sphere. A political contest, therefore, will not determine the distribution of power. The politicians have little power to distribute. The colonels have much, but they distribute it only from the barrels of their guns.

The structure of Salvadoran society siphons away what democratic energies the country can produce. Consider the possible results of the elections. If Roberto d'Aubuisson wins—and he has a popular base among the rural poor, those who simply want order as well as those who fear their landlords—then political legitimacy will have been provided for military illegitimacy. If José Napoleón Duarte wins—and he is the front-runner—he will come up against the same military officers who have stood between him and the reform of his country many times before. In neither case will a real transfer of power have taken place. (The military has always prevented Salvadorans from taking advantage of the opportunity of elections, or of the opportunity of their results. In their 1972 and 1976 presidential elections, the Salvadoran people voted for democrats over military officers—and were cheated by the losers.) There is a joker in the Salvadoran deck, then, and of a decidedly unfunny kind.

Much as we must admire the elections of El Salvador, we must also be realistic about them. Mr. Reagan has called the elections an "opportunity for El Salvador to build its democracy." But whether the March 25 vote can build democracy any more than previous elections in El Salvador is far from certain. (See "The Democratic Mystique," by Robert A. Dahl, page 17.) Elections may constitute a kind of optical illusion, according to which the words and the actions of many well-meaning Salvadorans

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will be allowed to obscure the real political impotence in which they live. There is the distinct possibility that these elections will have the effect of building only a façade behind which the more odious in the military and oligarchy of El Salvador can operate.

When elections are divorced from the transfer of power, as now seems the case, the United States faces a painful dilemma. Mr. Duarte is detested by the military officers at whose sufferance he will nevertheless have to serve should he win. Mr. d'Aubuisson is detested, rightly, by the members of the United States Congress to whom he would be beholden for military aid should he win; and the reform-minded professionals in the Salvadoran Army would be in a worse position than they are now. Mr. Duarte, if he wins, will have little power. Mr. d'Aubuisson, if he wins, will have few allies in Washington. Thus, the Reagan Administration may see itself as having to choose between its stated principle, democracy, and its ally, the Salvadoran government.

OVER THE last three years Congress has offered its own solution. In an effort to avoid such a painful choice, it has obliged the Administration to "certify" progress in improving human rights conditions in El Salvdor before U.S. military aid could go forth. The threat to cut off aid was supposed to ensure that the conditions would be improved. The Administration routinely certified such progress until last November, when, because of an unusually ugly outburst of violence in El Salvador, it could no longer plausibly do so. High Administration officials were dispatched to San Salvador to deliver stern warnings about Washington's growing difficulties with the death squads. Some reform of the military was undertaken: a few officers were transferred from their powerful posts, training in restraint was intensified, and there was some humanitarian-sounding rhetoric. But it did not go far enough. Meanwhile the reports accumulate—most recently a long, dolorous one by Stephen Kinzer in *The New York Times*—that the death squads are dispatched from the very highest levels of the Salvadoran military, that these officers who are not capable of successfully destroying guerrillas are quite capable of successfully destroying civilians. Some say Mr. d'Aubuisson has been actively involved.

In other words, "conditionality," as it has been applied up to now, simply has not worked. Today almost no one can dispute that the Salvadoran government as it is now constituted will not curb the human rights abuses committed by military officers and their civilian associates, far away from any battlefield. The Reagan Administration, if it is honest, must argue bleakly that there are higher American priorities than Salvadoran human rights (human rights meaning, in this context, not anything so elevated as democracy but simply the physical security of persons who may or may not be suspected of potential anti-oligarchical sympathies), and that military aid must go forth regardless of how many are murdered, lest the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas win.

And indeed, the guerrillas must not win; their victory would be a disaster for El Salvador, whose torments would take only a different form, and a disaster for the United States, whose interests obviously extend to its close neighbors to the south. We should be clear about that. But we should be clear about something else. Whatever our intentions and whoever else gets our military aid, Latin-style fascists—the word is not too strong—get it too.

For reasons of security and strategy, these villains calculate that they have the United States over a barrel; they are aware that this Administration, and perhaps any Administration, will not accept a catastrophic reverse in Central America. The Administration appears to agree with this assessment of its own powerlessness. The difficulty is this: to ally the United States with a faction that can hold power only by violent repression is to guarantee that sooner or later the alternatives will not be Communists or fascists but rather a Communist victory or a massive American military intervention. Given a choice between communism and war for the people of El Salvador, no doubt the American people will choose the latter. But what if the choice is between communism for El Salvador and war for the United States?

Sooner or later, too, the American people will gag upon an alliance with murderers who flaunt their crimes as the death squads do. They will demand an end to it, and damn the consequences. This is the position to which many Democrats have been driven (and all the Democratic candidates, too). They are demanding that "conditionality" no longer be a matter of certification but of action.

We agree with them; but our agreement stops with the damning of the consequences. If you are serious about human rights, you must be serious about preventing a guerrilla victory. But if you are serious about preventing a guerrilla victory, you must be serious about human rights—not about the establishment of North American-style democracy, perhaps, or even about the establishment of Costa Rican-style democracy, but about the abolition of mass murder. The United States simply cannot place the fate of the security of its southern borders in the hands of a faction of a Salvadoran faction that uses murder as an instrument of political maneuver, and that posits its own domination of Salvadoran society as a higher priority than any other, including the survival of a non-Communist El Salvador.

THERE IS no "good" solution for El Salvador, and for America's agony there. "Nonintervention" long ago disappeared as a thinkable option. We have intervened; we will continue to intervene, whether directly or by indirection, and whether the result is failure or success. We must begin to understand that the risks of alliance with the death squads are no less than the risks of making good the threat to end military aid; in the end, the consequences are the same. But we must also begin to contemplate the possibility of choices beyond these. The avenue of negotiations has been viewed by the Reagan Administration with the deepest suspicion. That avenue should be explored; and its promoters, such as the Contadora group of

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countries, should be encouraged, as many in the United States Congress have urged. Two cautions, however. First, conciliation may truly be impossible between the Salvadoran implacables. Second, negotiations alone cannot solve the problem, cannot free the United States from the agony of responsibility. By all means, let there be negotiations between the "moderates" on both sides. But let it not be imagined that negotiating a settlement is the same as achieving one. As there are "moderates" on both sides in El Salvador, so too are there extremists, whose interests are such that they would necessarily seek to sabotage any settlement—by any means necessary, in the old phrase. Once a settlement is negotiated, then, it might have to be imposed—and by American power. That is why in the end the only moral choice may be military intervention—not in alliance with the death squads but in opposition to them.

It is in a sober spirit, therefore, that we should approach the forthcoming elections. They may produce a genuine disruption of tyranny by democracy; it happened in Argentina. But they may not; indeed, nothing less than a revolution like that of Raúl Alfonsín would make a decisive difference in El Salvador, where the military is in a much stronger position than was the discredited and demoralized military of Argentina. The United States must disabuse itself of any prettifying perceptions of the Salvadoran political process. To be sure, the Communists must not take the country. But it must not be given to them by way of the fascists either.

NOTEBOOK

□ WE HAVE DISCOVERED an issue on which UNESCO does *not* have a position. Asked on a recent edition of the PBS program "American Interests" to assess the implications of the fact that twelve K.G.B. agents expelled from France for flagrant espionage had been on the staff of his organization, a UNESCO official named Doudou Diene replied that spying "is an issue between two superpowers. It goes beyond UNESCO. This is the only information I can give you." (Does this have anything to do with the New World Information Order we've been hearing about?) Mr. Diene added, "I do believe that international organizations are used—by all powers—to have their people working there and having other functions. I think it is done by many countries, but UNESCO has no stand on this one." And they say UNESCO has been politicized. For shame.

□ TWO YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "[If the proposed Hunt Commission rules are approved,] then the ultimate irony of the law of unintended consequences will have prevailed. A reform commission which set out with an overwhelming consensus to deemphasize the primaries, to ensure a deliberative convention, and to make it more difficult for an unknown to win the nomination without significant support of elected officials and party leaders will have written rules which produce the following result: a dark horse, regionally based, 'outsider' candidate with time to spare will surprise the experts and do well in Iowa, win in New Hampshire just a week later, carry his momentum into the caucus and big primary states in March and April, and, combined with a solid base of delegates from his own region, lock up the nomination months before the convention. Sound familiar?" ("Reforming the Reforms," by Lanny J. Davis, February 17, 1982).

Does change have to mean pain?

BREAKING THE LINK

HERE'S A NEW idea for Gary Hart, or Walter Mondale, or any other Democrat who cares to pick up on it.

Later this year, somewhere in the Midwest, another major factory will close. Its managers realized two years ago that the only way they could stay competitive with new assembly-line techniques being introduced in Japan and elsewhere would be by doubling productivity within five years. Half that time is gone, and it has become obvious that they're not going to make it. Reluctantly, this firm's able—and not unpatriotic—managers have concluded that they just can't make the needed major changes in time. So their parent company has decided to move all remaining production to Taiwan.

At least the company in this tale—a true one, by the way—saw the danger coming. Some of its competitors can't even say that much. But that won't keep its workers from becoming yet additional victims of the barriers our society has built against uncomfortable change.

Over the last thirty years, America has invested at 70 percent Germany's rate and half Japan's. What's worse, in trying to avoid pain by stopping change, we've invested less and less wisely. Unless we break out of this pattern, we'll continue to fall behind. Ultimately, revitalizing the economy will require more investment. Even at the current rate of investment, though, we can get more out of what we invest by investing more intelligently. And smarter investment is politically easier, because it doesn't require less consumption. What smarter investment *does* require is breaking the connection between change and pain.

Change, especially the sort of rapid structural change America needs, now tends to bring enormous losses—losses which people can't deal with alone and which they see, correctly, as unfair. A plant closure destroys its workers' chief asset, their seniority-protected "ownership" of their jobs. Churches, neighborhoods, local businesses, property values, tax revenues, even friendships all suffer.

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And as long as change entails real misery for workers and their communities, our remarkably responsive political system will fight it at all levels—usually effectively. The only way to avoid triggering this powerful braking mechanism is to do something about the reasons people fight back. The key is making sure workers can reliably get attractive jobs promptly after losing their old work. Tying change to good new jobs makes change politically possible.

Companies and unions confronted with the need to introduce fundamental improvements in labor productivity, or to cut back in an old, uncompetitive sector, generally can't provide the necessary new jobs themselves. The economy's new jobs are being created in other firms and sectors. How could our foundering Midwestern plant possibly reemploy the half of its work force it would no longer have needed had it become automated at home?

Japan, which is now in the middle of a five-year plan to cut the labor content of its assembly-line products in half, has a way out of the dilemma: it proposes to double its sales over the same period, thereby holding its labor needs constant. Its firms can quite plausibly do this, given the sharply lower costs and improved quality their manufacturing lead is already providing them. Of course, their success will only aggravate the problems of their lagging competitors—such as the United States.

Our managers and workers are trapped. They've got to respond right away, often radically, to survive: but, even together, they seldom control enough variables to be able to save themselves.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD provide a way out of this trap by making it easy for workers displaced in such circumstances to get attractive new jobs in the larger national labor market. That's what the so-called Workers' Productivity Incentive, which has been endorsed by the House Democratic Caucus, would do. It would create a simple but powerful market incentive that would make such laid-off workers especially attractive to potential employers. For example, when workers are laid off because of the introduction of new production techniques (such as computer-assisted manufacturing and "smart" machine tools or robots) that are needed to allow American industry to compete, these workers would be given special certificates. The certificates would make the workers' next employers eligible for either tax credits or subsidies equal to half the wages they pay these employees for from three to five years. This simple incentive would help solve the worst problems of both the employees and their communities. By assuring both that change means good new jobs, it would begin to break the connection between change and pain.

Employees armed with such certificates would jump right to the head of the employment line—either at home or anywhere else in the country. Offering themselves at half price, they'll face little competition in getting whatever jobs are available; and they'll also be able to negotiate from a position of strength for whatever training and terms they feel most important. They still may not welcome change, but their fear would begin to dissolve and their energies would quickly shift to mapping their future.

Their communities would also benefit. First, their existing businesses would find it easier to remain competitive. Second, they would be given a strong negotiating hand with which to attract new, growing employers: the powerful lever of a disciplined, half-price labor force. By refocusing local political energies on attracting new employers, the incentive would remove what has probably been the strongest pressure behind the last decade's drift to lemon socialism.

How hard would the Workers' Productivity Incentive be to administer? The Labor Department's prior experience with analogous programs suggests that this one would not be particularly difficult to run. That tends to be true of programs designed to help established workers as opposed to programs that deal chiefly with poor people employers didn't want. The administrators' job would probably turn on three issues: deciding when to use the incentive, deciding when and whether employers could get the incentive for redeploying their own workers, and guarding against fraud schemes involving phony firing and hiring. On the first issue, Congress could lay down guidelines in the law and then delegate the details to an agency or a tripartite body. As in Japan, the process might be triggered by a petition from a minimum proportion of a particular industry. The second and third issues could be dealt with through a combination of objective formulae—chiefly linking payments to historical attrition rates—and case-by-case scrutiny.

If laid-off workers moved to new jobs quickly, the incentive could, on balance, make money for the government during its first year or two: even 50 percent salary subsidies would cost less than the dependency payments the public would otherwise be making to these workers. (Workers could be encouraged to negotiate new jobs promptly by reducing the duration of their incentive if they stayed on unemployment longer than, say, six months.) In subsequent years, the incentive would become a net cost to the federal treasury. But even this cost would increasingly be counterbalanced by the new tax revenues that would flow from the more productive economic activity the incentive would help make possible.

The Workers' Productivity Incentive is a bargain, and its political appeal runs across the spectrum of conservative and liberal, management and labor. It's one "new idea" that shows the way toward smarter and therefore faster growth. Yet it doesn't entail picking winners and losers. Its magic is simple: it cuts away the deep—and unacceptable—unfairness now so closely tied to economic change.

WILLIAM DRAYTON

William Drayton is a management consultant and lawyer. During the Carter Administration he was an assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

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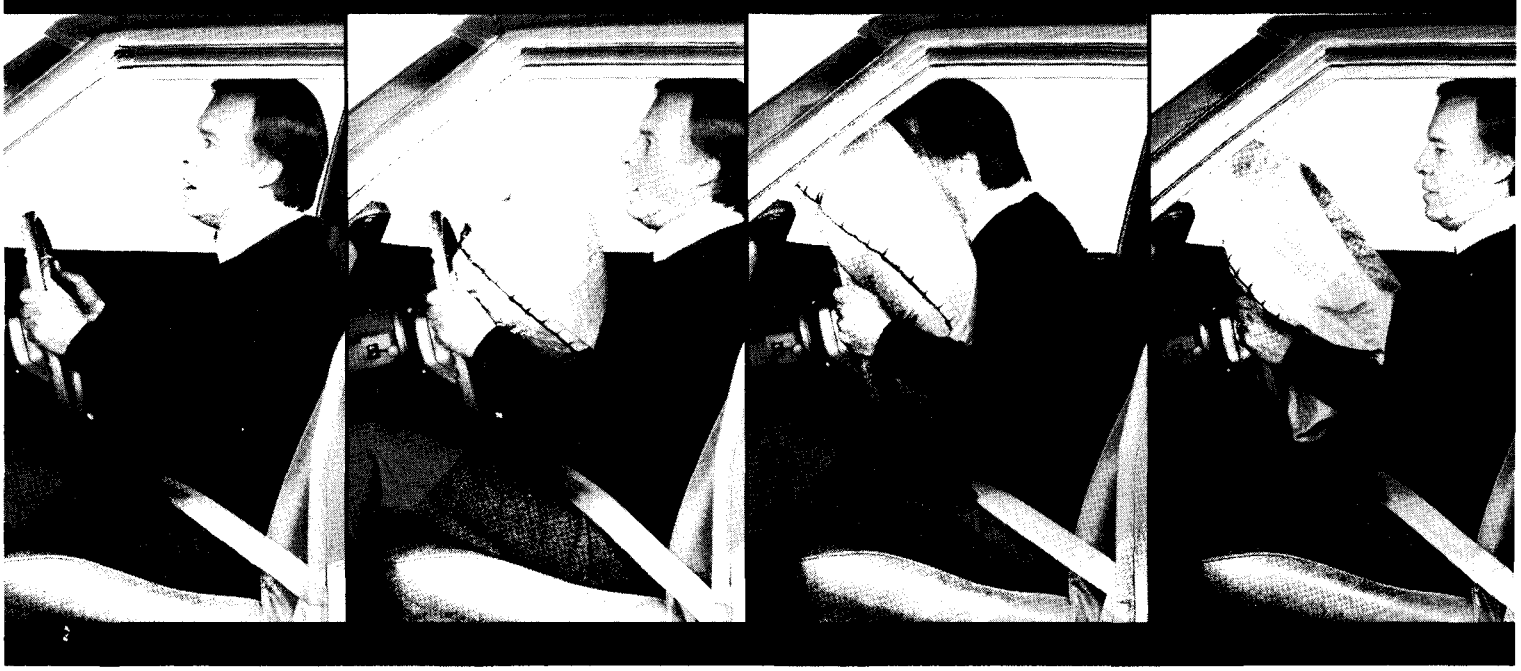

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In an accident, air bags automatically provide a cushioning buffer between you and the car. They protect occupants' necks, heads and faces from flying glass and other debris. They're most effective in front and front-angle collisions, the deadliest kinds of crashes.

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It wasn't a campaign, it was a lobby.

MONDALE'S DAYS OF RAGE

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

IT TOOK less than a month for Walter Mondale to go from one kind of inevitability to another. Time and again before New Hampshire he had declared, "This is the sweetest primary ever." He had expected to have the nomination in hand by Super Tuesday, March 13. When the day of his anointment rolled around, the issue was still inevitability, but it was no longer victory that was inevitable. Mondale reacted to his sudden reversal by passing into the first two stages of mourning: denial and anger. He expressed disbelief that this could be happening to him. He had, after all, constructed the most substantial organization, amassed the most money, collected the most endorsements. Politics to him was a subtle technical craft, and he had spent virtually his entire life learning it. Was everything he knew wrong? Gary Hart, his rival, struck him as something like "a Cabbage Patch doll," a "fad," whose politics were based on "hype" and "tinsel." But what appeared to Mondale to be overwhelming realities were not compelling the allegiance of most voters. The inescapable truths of Washington, where the Mondale campaign was carefully nurtured over three and a half years, lacked resonance in the country. None of the constituency groups Mondale had counted on really delivered. What happened to organized labor? Where was the beef?

Mondale's politics have been commonly considered to be traditional. His rise from the lowest level of local precincts to the apex of national prominence was a classical odyssey. He is staunchly partisan, a loyalist, a "real Democrat." And his campaign has rested upon a coalition of all the usual groups—and some new ones. Mondale's campaign, however, is in its own way every bit as novel as Hart's. Both are responses to the collapse of the old party system, where the bosses actually could deliver what they promised. Within the Democratic Party, George McGovern's and Jimmy Carter's candidacies were proof that the traditional party had departed. Mondale appreciated Carter's shortcomings, but not the cause of his initial elevation. In 1984 Mondale wanted to re-create the traditional party whose last hurrah was the 1968 campaign of Hubert Humphrey, Mondale's mentor, who was almost elected President on the strength of organized labor's last-minute effort. Mondale's image of the party was drawn from the past, but he saw its reality in the self-enclosed world of Washington. His campaign ultimately has been based on wishful thinking, which he feels is utterly practical and realistic. "So," James Johnson, his campaign chairman, told a friend in 1981, "if it's a normal year, we win."

The essential premise of the campaign was to bend the selection of delegates to the Democratic convention to fit Mondale's strengths. To succeed, the campaign also had to bend the perception of the process. Mondale's most valuable resource was his Rolodex of contacts. He knew all the party people, the interest groups, the financial angels, the national political reporters and editors. His mastery of the Washington culture was complete. After Carter's 1980 defeat, Mondale could easily have reestablished his identity back home. He never gave a second thought, however, to running from anywhere but Washington. Mondale of Washington eclipsed Mondale of Minnesota; the Establishment figure overshadowed the populist. Mondale felt no tension between these poles; he believed that he resolved the contradictions in himself. He considered his views to be a logical progression from those of his prairie populist father, the Rev. Theodore Mondale. To Fritz, liberalism was at once a movement of the dispossessed and a movement of a temporarily supplanted Establishment. He conflated ideals and interests, which aren't necessarily in conflict but also aren't necessarily the same.

Throughout 1981, after the Carter debacle, a vast network of lobbyists and lawyers gathered around Mondale. In fact, almost every person in a top campaign position was a lobbyist, from Robert Beckel, the campaign manager, to Anne Wexler, the dominant member of Mondale's political action committee, Citizens for the Future of America. Mondale himself became a lobbyist when he joined the law firm of Winston and Strawn, whose chief partner is his good friend, John Reilly. As Vice President, Mondale had served as Carter's legislative liaison to Congress, in effect his lobbyist. Carter had roots, Mondale had connections. He was the outsider's insider. Like many liberals who came to Washington to do good, he stayed to do well—a phenomenon so common that the formula has become a cliché. The Mondale campaign was the Mondale lobby.

At its heart was James Johnson, Mondale's longtime aide, who set up a lobbying outfit called Public Strategies, Inc., at 2550 M Street, N.W., the same address as Winston and Strawn. Johnson lives in a spare apartment across from the office. His life is largely circumscribed by a few blocks on the edge of Georgetown. His intelligence, according to those who have worked closely with him, is incisive, narrow, and cautious. As early as 1981, he was

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using the word "inevitability" to recruit political operatives.

Johnson conceived of the Democratic Party as a legislative body and of Mondale's nomination as a bill that would be enacted into law. With the divisive civil rights and Vietnam issues in the past, the campaign tried to express a new consensus. In the attempt to forge this consensus Mondale implicitly accepted the symbolic claims of the interest groups headquartered in Washington. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. was working people, NOW was women, and the N.E.A. was teachers. He had a vision of The People, Inc. And when he won an organizational endorsement he believed he had won a segment of public opinion. He understood public opinion only in a hierarchical and institutional form. By achieving a consensus in Washington he believed he had achieved one in the country; by mediating among Washington leaders he would become the leader of American society. Mondale designed a party that would appreciate his special appeal.

Like Edward M. Kennedy, he had considerable influence over the Hunt Commission, which rewrote the party rules. Both Kennedy and Mondale were insiders who used the rules to create an inside track to the 1984 nomination. Who would win the race would be decided later, but they took similar approaches. According to the Mondale view, the ideal delegate was someone who could be lobbied. What was publicly called "inevitability" was based on the submerged principle of "lobbyability," the notion that delegates would play the game Mondale had framed on the Washington model. By helping to shape the new rules, the Mondale campaign constructed a bureaucratic drama to drive the lobbying enterprise.

Its progress would be marked exclusively in quantitative and linear terms: number of delegates courted, dollars pledged, bumperstickers printed. The rest of the Democratic field was viewed mechanically. If the pace set by the Mondale benchmarks kept the opposition candidates low in press coverage, interest group support, and funds, they would eventually have to drop out. Then their supporters would have no choice but to support Mondale. No attempt was made to compete for the others' real or potential constituencies, particularly the essentially unorganized cohort of younger voters that came to be called the "new generation." Mondale operatives believed that they would crush all resistance by outlobbying the other candidates for the support of the party insiders.

The strategy was to present the candidate as experienced in the byways and folkways of Washington and thus more effective. But the strategy had a subtext. It was also an ideology, a justification of the key Mondale operatives' status within Washington.

By the end of 1981 the Mondale lobby was thriving and the candidate was emerging publicly. Jim Johnson started to use a new word: "chits." Mondale would compete against Kennedy in 1982 by picking up chits to be cashed in later. He endorsed more candidates, slept in more Holiday Inns, ate more rubber chickens than any other candidate. He was educating the party about the Mondale lobby. His appearances were tightly regulated by his scheduler, Rebecca McGowan, who exercised enormous control over his person and through it over his persona. The private Mondale is informal, warm, and humorous. But when some Mondale operatives brought up the idea of somehow showing this side, McGowan objected. "That wouldn't be *Vice Presidential*," she reprimanded. Johnson backed her up, and Mondale stayed buttoned down.

On December 1, 1982, Walter Mondale, who had been appointed to every public office he ever held from Attorney General of Minnesota to Senator to Vice President, was appointed front-runner. The person who appointed him was Edward Kennedy, who did so by bowing out. Mondale had never won a position through conflict, and he hadn't run a truly competitive campaign under his own name since 1966—a full generation ago. His luck seemed to be holding. He rose in the national polls and the money flowed in; new quantitative measurements gave the campaign new credibility. Moreover, the path to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. endorsement, the crown jewel of endorsements, was now unobstructed. With Kennedy on the scene, an internal debate within organized labor would have ensued. Kennedy's withdrawal, however, stopped discussion. Labor was overtaken by circumstance and Mondale was duly appointed labor's candidate. The inside track, created by the Hunt Commission, appeared clear.

IF 1982 was the year of the chit, 1983 was the year of the straw poll. On February 21, Mondale announced his candidacy, using the phrase "I know" more than a dozen times in his last dozen sentences: "I know what I'm doing." He was running as the unabashed insider, seeking the restoration of budget cuts *and* the Washington players ousted in 1980. He didn't explain, however, what shortcomings of liberalism might have helped bring about Reagan's ascension to power in the first place. To him, Reagan was an aberration, a "radical," whose rise could be explained only by external causes such as the Iranian hostage crisis. Mondale's understanding of history was exclusively partisan; it had just one dimension.

In state after state, the Mondale lobby contrived a series of straw polls, orchestrating contests where likely delegates would be present. The campaign would compete for and win interest group favor in forums of its own making. The straw polls were new benchmarks fostering the perception of "inevitability." It was a phony war that conveyed the image of success.

In the spring of 1983 there was an ominous sign. Mondale, thinking he would pick up a valuable chit, endorsed Richard Daley Jr. for mayor of Chicago. Daley ran the campaign of a front-runner and insider, evoking the names and legacy of his father, buried seven years earlier. Daley lost to a black insurgent, Harold Washington. Mondale was disturbed; he worried that part of the black vote might now be lost to him. Beyond that, he saw no lessons for his own campaign. He moved on to more straw polls.

And to John Glenn. The former astronaut was a shadow Reagan. Glenn's effort seemed to offer the perfect test. He

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matched Mondale's campaign asymmetrically at almost every point. He was conservative, Mondale liberal; he relied upon media, Mondale upon organization. By the end of the year Glenn had begun his long descent. Mondale appeared more inevitable than ever.

AS MONDALE marched toward victory, a feeling of resignation quietly grew among Democrats. He seemed to be the only available option to oppose Reagan, but he also seemed doomed. An NBC poll in Iowa showed that three-quarters of the voters shared these sentiments. Mondale fit neatly into the story Reagan wished to tell, a story of big government vanquished and free markets revived. With Mondale in the picture Reagan could project his Manichaean vision; Mondale would play the "failed policies of the past." In a sense, he was Reagan's justification. For many young voters, Mondale stood for a closed system in which everything was known and had been tried before. He represented the end of the horizon, the death of hope. The undercurrent of frustration was extremely powerful.

On the eve of the New Hampshire primary, Mondale's dream-party was almost a reality. On January 27 one of his top aides told me: "Interest groups, the Establishment—they're almost not there as factors. Anti-Establishment feelings don't turn up in the Presidential race." Mondale had neglected just one group: almost everyone under the age of forty-five. In voting for Gary Hart, many in the new generation had a sensation of empowering themselves.

In New Hampshire, Mondale went through the looking glass. The tools he had forged and polished, and which he had flourished before an awestruck press, were suddenly worse than useless. At first, he was bewildered. Then he was filled with fury. His days of rage followed. On March 9 in a prepared speech at Emory University, he made a sour appeal to the new generation. "To appeal to your suspected cynicism, he would market himself as an outsider gunning for the Establishment," he said about Hart. "To play toward your alleged insecurity, he would build a platform with plenty of room for self-interest and a little space for generosity. And to exploit your rumored taste for tinsel, he would drape himself in newness." A few days later he called Hart "a coldhearted wretch who lacks compassion." And in Boston he said, evidently referring to Hart's separations from his wife, "I haven't stayed with public life to get away from my family. I've got a good one." Mondale failed to understand Hart's politics or his special generational knowledge. Hart was a mystery.

In the meantime, Mondale attempted to reinvent himself. His ads had previously ended: "This President will know what he's doing." Now they concluded: "This President will fight on our side." But could Mondale be the candidate of change against the one who changed everything? A new ad featured black-and-white photographs of a farmhouse, a general store, and a rural church congregation while the narrator intoned: "Working on small farms in Minnesota, Walter Mondale learned that the strength of America comes from the land." Not from the Beltway.

Mondale now had harsh negative ads on the air, slamming Hart's "new ideas" as fraudulent and misguided. But according to private Hart polls, these spots served only to double Mondale's negative ratings. Mondale's greatest personal asset, polls show, is his "decency" and "compassion." By turning to negative advertising he risked his positive image, much as John Glenn had done when he ran negative ads against Mondale.

Super Tuesday was the reductio ad absurdum of the Mondale campaign. He had reformed the party rules to prevent another outsider, another Carter, from capturing the nomination. Mondale was caught in the devices of his own making. By "frontloading" the primaries he had created a mechanism that could destroy him. In order to save himself he traveled to Georgia where he was embraced by Carter. Without this endorsement, he would have lost Georgia and with it, perhaps, his ability to stay in the race. Because of Jimmy Carter, Mondale could continue. It was the only endorsement that ever delivered anything significant to him.

"I am ready—I am ready to be President," Mondale told us. But Americans' image of the President differs from his. They don't want a President who is merely effective in Washington terms; they want one who's independent of the legislative process. So long as Mondale represented himself as the candidate of the Congressional caucus, so long as his home state seemed to be Capitol Hill, the public wouldn't accept him as Commander-in-Chief. The more the Mondale lobby pushed its image of the Presidency the less the public saw Mondale as President. The separation of powers is an idea the public carries in its bones. Americans know what a President is, but Mondale has been telling them that they need a prime minister. Thus, even his "experience" then, his final rationale, is flawed. The people and the campaign have fundamentally opposing conceptions of the Presidency. Americans are always ready for a President. They just haven't been ready for Mondale.

THE MONDALE campaign may go on, but his phantasmagorical effort to resurrect the traditional party has failed. The Mondale lobby was unable to rebuild the old organization on a new basis. Instead it constructed a political Potemkin village. The real political organization of the United States in the 1980s is not the network of mediating groups, with letterheads and mailing lists, on which Mondale relied. It is the gigantic web of electronic filigree, of broadcasting and receiving, that places a television set in every inhabited space in the land. To use *that* organization a politician must have a message. In recent days, on the stump and in advertisements, Mondale has become a full-throated populist. He has a message now but the time may be too late for it. The public's ears still ring with the echoes of three years of lobbying, of caution, of the inside track. By denouncing Hart as the manufactured candidate of media, Mondale is running against what has become the real political process—a process Hart did not create but merely has understood. And by trying to convince Americans that "newness" is inherently wrong, Mondale is running against the entire culture.

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He'd give Reagan a run and a half.

HART'S LONG MARCH

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

THROUGHOUT his cold, lonely year in the single digits, Gary Hart never doubted that he would emerge first as Walter Mondale's chief rival and then as the Democratic nominee. He has reached the first goal in dazzling style, and though the second remains a little beyond his grasp after Super Tuesday, Hart says he is sure not only about getting nominated but also about getting elected President. "I hate to say things like that because it always comes out in black and white sounding more arrogant than I intend it," he said in an interview aboard his campaign plane last week, "but I'm telling you that my instincts tell me I can do it."

How? "Look," he said, "the Reagan strategy is to do two things—blame all the problems on the Democrats, and practice what I call the politics of distraction—try and get people to pay attention to abortion, school prayer, and other highly polarized social issues and not deficits and the arms race. I'll take both those away from him, and I'll be a smaller target for Reagan than a traditional Democrat would be." On the issues level of general election strategy, Hart plans to put Reagan on the defensive on such issues as the federal budget deficit, the continuing unemployment of nine million workers ("the only people back at work in the recovery are the ones he put out of work in the recession"), the failure to rebuild basic American industry, the deterioration of infrastructure, and the loss of U.S. leadership in trade and technology.

Assuming Hart is nominated, a major tactic of his race against Reagan will be to play upon fears of what a second Reagan term would be like. Hart said that in spite of the economic recovery and generally favorable public attitudes about Reagan, "people will vote against him out of fear of nuclear war, a Pentagon out of control, and fear of the loss of American lives in Central America, the Persian Gulf, and Lebanon. That's one set of issues about which people feel insecure.

"A second group is the equality issues—the fear of continued abandonment of the government's twenty-five-year commitment to civil rights and equality for women. There are powerful, powerful messages there that have nothing to do with economics. I'll tell you, something is seeping into people about this. Things are going to get a lot worse in a second term." Hart's aides say he will make a special issue of the potential Reaganite domination of the U.S. Supreme Court for a generation to come.

"The third group of issues is economic. Nine million are out of work, but thirty million fear losing their jobs. They might not fear it as much as a couple of years ago, but under Reagan they still fear it. People fundamentally know that the country has to change. Those factory workers know they are working on outdated equipment. They know they don't have the skills necessary to compete, and they're scared to death. Young people are worried about their security, too. They can't go to school because student loans have been cut. They are scared to death that they might have to fight a war and they're not sure that the economy of the next four years has a place for them."

Hart has found a compelling way to attack Reagan on the budget deficits: he raises the issue to the level of ethics. "The Reagan deficits threaten the survival and competitiveness of the economy for decades to come," he told a University of Georgia audience the week before Super Tuesday. "I believe these unjustified and unaffordable deficits represent an economic Vietnam that will come back to haunt your generation as long as you live. For the first time in this nation's history, one generation is stealing from future generations to pay for the immediate greed of a handful of interests and to get President Reagan re-elected. This is an example of economic immorality."

Another line of attack that Hart intends to employ is "corruption" among Reagan appointees. In a late-January speech in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Hart charged that "almost fifty high-ranking officials of the Reagan Administration have faced serious allegations involving criminal wrongdoing, unethical behavior, or abuses of power and privilege." He cited such cases as Richard Allen's acceptance of $1,000 and three watches from a Japanese interviewer; Anne Burford's coziness with industrial polluters; stock market investigations involving a former National Security Council official, Thomas Reed, and a former Deputy Defense Secretary, Paul Thayer; and at least five cases of potential conflicts of interest. The speech got little notice at the time, but it will be revived in an effort to show that officials of this antigovernment government don't mind using government to enrich themselves.

"Every campaign has to have a positive message as well as a negative one," Hart told me. "And my positive message will be that every one of the problems I've cited is soluble. We can have an industrial modernization program that puts more manufacturing workers to work than are now, despite automation. There is a necessary long-term jobs program related to rebuilding the nation's

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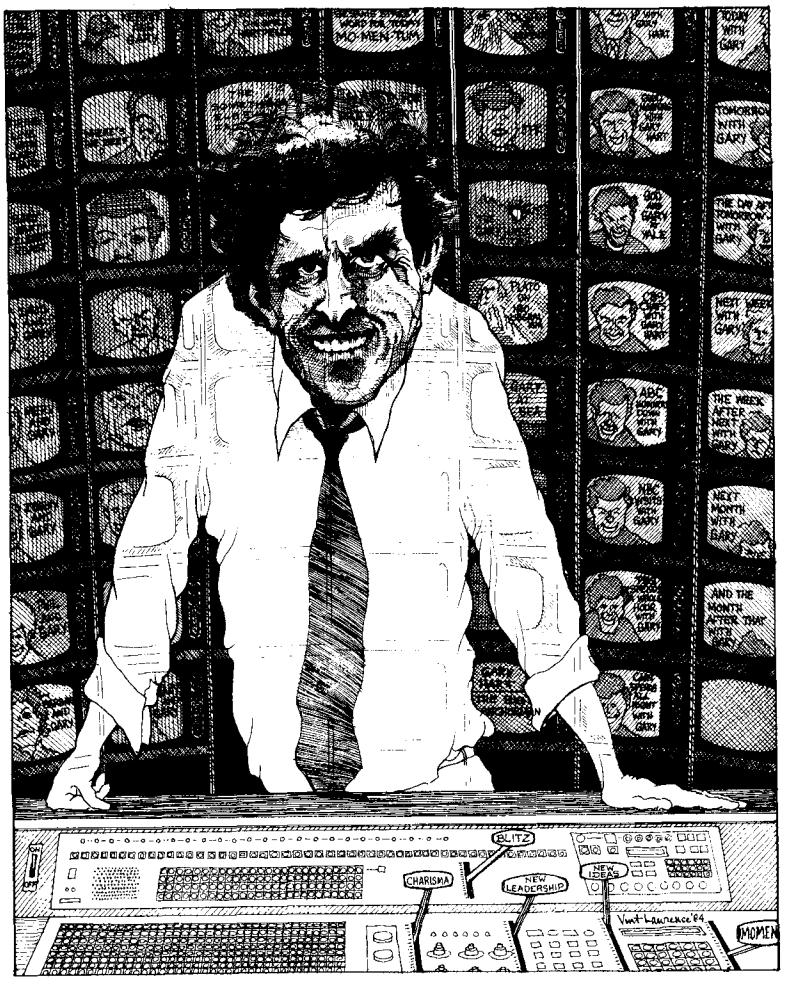
capital assets. And there are steps we can take in education and training, entrepreneurship and aggressive trade to guarantee the growth sector of the economy in high technology, where 90 percent of the new jobs come from."

Unlike the sort of Democrats Reagan could lambaste as "captives of an anti-growth, dinosaur mentality," Hart offers an appealing future of growth, prosperity, and opportunity—and also of equality, justice, peace, and idealism. Hart's vision is every bit as optimistic as Reagan's, and he tops it off in talking to college audiences with this dig: "Our nation hasn't passed its prime. Our leaders have." That line brings almost as much applause as the never-failing, "We should not send American boys to die unnecessarily in Lebanon, for Persian Gulf oil, or to serve as bodyguards for Central American dictators."

Like Reagan, Hart poses as a Washington outsider. In the South, he even used an old George Wallace line: "We will send a message to Washington that we will not submit to insider rule." Hart's obvious model, of course, is John Kennedy. Hart too goes coatless and hatless even in bitter cold. He uses Kennedy phrases ("Ask not . . ."). He puts his hand in his coat pocket like Kennedy and straightens his tie at the waist like Kennedy. And, at least on television, his wife looks just a little like Jacqueline.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Hart told Roger Mudd in a Super Tuesday TV interview that he's imitating nobody, but that's not so. As Michael Kramer revealed in *New York* magazine, the Kennedy nostalgia is heavily contrived—tested out, in fact, in focus groups supervised by Hart's pollster, Dottie Lynch. Hart campaign aides admit they look up Kennedy quotes to put in Hart speeches because "people like it." Nevertheless, the idealism of Hart's Kennedyesque message is compelling. Hart says he concurs with Kennedy that the United States faces "a long twilight struggle" with communism, but that he wants to conduct it politically and diplomatically, not militarily. He says he would "challenge the Soviets to a crusade to eliminate hunger for every child on this planet in the 1980s." Instead of being "the arsenal of the world," he says, "the United States should be the university of the world" and "the granary of the world."

Though he disparages the "outworn . . . irrelevant . . . discarded . . . outmoded" politics of the past ("I don't have to mention the fact that Reagan is twenty-six years older than I am," he said. "That's the one thing you don't mention.") and though he offers "new ideas" for a "new generation," Hart also attempts to place his "New Democracy" theme in the grand Democratic tradition of Wilson's New Freedom, F.D.R.'s New Deal, and J.F.K.'s New Frontier—all of which, he says, were characterized by openness to change.

Hart's political strategy is to hold the traditional Democratic base—minorities, liberals, workers, and issue activists—while reaching out (as Walter Mondale couldn't) to independents and moderate Republicans. Reagan's strategy, meanwhile, is to peel off so-called "weak Democrats"—Southern whites and urban blue-collar workers—as he did in 1980. That is a crucial constituency, representing 25 percent of the electorate, and the "politics of distraction" is crucial to keeping it. According to the public opinion analyst William Schneider, Reagan also is trying to pull at this group by "neutralizing the economic issue"—talking up the current recovery to get workers to forget the 1982 recession. Hart will try to remind them about 1982, scare them about 1985, and inspire them about the future. He is also relying on his Senate record—"perfectly acceptable to all elements of the Democratic Party in the North and Northeast," Hart says—and on the unifying desire of labor and other groups to be rid of Ronald Reagan. And Hart, like Mondale, will try to expand the core Democratic turnout by encouraging voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts among southern blacks, Hispanics, younger women, and others. He said he knows he needs to reach out more to blacks than he has and he plans to do so by "symbolic actions," such as visiting Tuskegee Institute.

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Hart's "new generation" appeal is designed to overcome ideological differences within the sixty-one-million-strong cohort of voters between 25 and 44 years old, and especially within the "baby boom" group, aged 29 to 38, which represents 23 percent of the electorate. The most salient characteristic of younger voters, according to Schneider, is their independence from the two parties; and their formative political experiences are Vietnam, Watergate, and the economic insecurity of the 1970s. Hart is offering them noninterventionism, an aversion to special-interest politics, and a renewal of the economy. Accusations that Hart is a cool, pragmatic "neoliberal" probably help him with this group, many of whom voted for John Anderson last time. Anderson's "national unity" campaign plans for 1984 would be undercut by a Hart candidacy; indeed, Hart tells young audiences he'll establish "a government of national unity" himself, without saying what that means beyond equality for women.

ABOARD HIS plane, Hart said that his strategy for capturing an electoral-vote majority would be "one-third classic Democratic, one-third recapturing the South, and one-third opening up the West." The toughest third will be the South, though there, in a race against Reagan, he can appeal to "New South" entrepreneurs and blacks. "The crucial question," says William Schneider, "is 'Can Gary Hart beat Ronald Reagan in Texas?' Probably Hart can do better than Mondale because Hart is more of a Texas type. He wears cowboy boots. But George Bush is from Texas and the Republican convention will be in Texas. It'll be close."

Schneider guesses that on account of Hart's weakness in the South and in Texas, he will choose a running mate who will help him there—possibly Senator Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, a liberal whose wife is active in the nuclear freeze movement. Another theory making the rounds is that Hart will want to counter Reagan's appeal to working-class ethnics by choosing Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, a specialist in traditional family values. There's a lot of talk about Representative Geraldine Ferraro of New York; but Hart would probably hesitate to pick her, lest a debate over her Presidential qualifications end up dominating the campaign and eclipsing his other new ideas. Democratic consultant Mark A. Siegel says, "You can't begin to talk about Vice Presidential choices unless you know how and when the nomination is won, and how much weakness and damage has been done to the Presidential nominee because of the harshness of the battle." If the Presidential nominee is Mondale, he would now almost have to ask Hart to run with him. Hart says that if he's the nominee, his criteria will be an understanding of his new agenda and a capacity to serve as President.

On paper and in the eyes of many Democratic voters, Hart is a formidable opponent for President Reagan—more formidable than Walter Mondale. Ability to beat Reagan, in fact, seems to be the single most important factor in this young Lancelot's theft of Guinevere from the arms of good King Arthur. Hart's surge worries the Republicans because they had been comfortably anticipating a classic set-piece battle against a traditional Democratic army drawn up in neat interest-group squares. Hart confronts them with a totally changed picture, but some lines of attack are clear.

ONE THAT probably will not work is the charge that Hart is George McGovern II. Hart is a military reformer, not a unilateral disarmer, and having beaten Big Labor to win the nomination, he will come across to voters as personally tough, not weak. Nor will it work to say that Hart has no "new ideas." He may not have any grand new theory such as "supply-side economics," but individual training accounts (tax-exempt I.R.A.-style accounts for worker retraining), a "capital budget" to finance new public works, an updated National Defense Education Act, a freeze on plutonium manufacture, and taxes on toxic substances to pay for cleanup are all inventive enough.

A stronger argument against Hart is that his program is very expensive. On the stump, Hart is promising all of the following: to give every unemployed worker a job rebuilding bridges, highways, waterways, and urban sanitation systems; to make American education the "best in the world"; to "rebuild the great cities of America"; to provide nutrition programs, sanitation systems, schools, and technical assistance to fight Third World poverty and to add a preventive-medicine dimension to federally funded health care programs. He also plans to close the federal deficit. All this can't be done just by cutting defense by $150 billion over a five-year period. It's easy to imagine a Reagan campaign ad featuring a cash register adding up the price of Hart's "new ideas."

Another certain point of attack is Hart's jacuzzi-generation foreign policy, as distinct from his defense policy. Hart wants to reform the military—he told Michael Kramer that when he's finished the Pentagon will wish McGovern was President—but he has a horror of using it. Hart has announced that he would not defend the Persian Gulf oil routes with American ground forces. He would unilaterally pull U.S. troops out of Central America, leaving thousands of East bloc advisers in Nicaragua unmolested. He favors mutual arms reductions with the Soviets, but would scrap the MX missile without demanding any compensating Soviet stand-down. Reagan surely will charge that Hart's election would mean the end of the United States as a great power and would invite Soviet adventurism.

And then there is the issue of character. The Reagan campaign probably will never raise direct questions about why Hart changed his name, age, signature, and religion; but it can be expected to make Hart seem inexperienced, trendy, and un-Presidential—not so much young as thin.

On one level, this campaign really may boil down to a generational conflict. Does the country yearn for its first two-term Presidency since Ike's, or does it want yet another "fresh start"? If Hart is the nominee, it will mean that the Democratic Party, at least, was ready for its own generational leap this year rather than in 1988, as only

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Gary Hart among politicians of his age group seems to have seen. The television networks, another leading American institution, have replaced an older generation of anchormen (Cronkite, Chancellor, Reynolds) with a new generation (Rather, Brokaw, Jennings). We'll see in November if the country wants the same sort of toothy new face behind the big anchor desk in the Oval Office studio.

Hart currently leads the President in the Gallup poll, but the President has the White House and the capacity to shape the terms of debate. Neither side would be wise to underestimate the other. Ronald Reagan has been beaten by Republicans, but never by a Democrat. Gary Hart, if he wins the nomination, will have done it by shrewdly exploiting the flaws in Walter Mondale's strategy of inevitability and by toughing it out against the establishment of his party. Reagan vs. Hart ought to be some contest.

How the United States misconstrues Central America.

THE DEMOCRATIC MYSTIQUE

BY ROBERT A. DAHL

MUCH OF the debate over Central America has been based on what increasingly appears to be a faulty assumption: that the region's nondemocratic regimes—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and presumably Nicaragua as well—can all be converted into democracies by means of American assistance, guidance, and intervention. The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, assigned by President Reagan to find "means of building a national consensus on a comprehensive United States policy for the region," asserted that the first principle for U.S. policy should be "democratic self-determination." Since the commission released its report in January, the Reagan Administration has cited the Salvadoran presidential election on March 25 as a sign that democracy is finally taking root in Central America. But the truth is that these countries are no closer to the Administration's goal than they were four years ago, and that they are not likely to achieve stable democratic institutions for a long time to come. The immediate aim of U.S. policy cannot simply be, as the commission advised, to "advance the cause of democracy, broadly defined, within the hemisphere." It must also include a systematic exploration of how the United States should deal with the authoritarian regimes of the region.

It is a disagreeable, perhaps even tragic, fact that in much of the world the conditions most favorable to the development and maintenance of democracy are nonexistent, or at best only weakly present. Three of these conditions are notably absent in Central America, with the exception of Costa Rica: an adequate level of social and economic development, traditions supportive of democratic values, and a military that is politically neutral.

Enduring legitimately elected governments are a rarity in countries with the social and economic development of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In 1978, the most recent year for which authoritative figures are available, the per capita G.N.P. of Costa Rica was $1,610; that of Portugal, the poorest European country, was $1,940. Although the figures are not highly reliable, the best estimates for Honduras in 1978 are $480 per capita; for El Salvador, $640; for Nicaragua, $840; and for Guatemala, $930. In the same year illiteracy ranged from 38 percent in El Salvador to 54 percent in Guatemala. On the other hand, the Sandinistas claim to have reduced Nicaragua's 57 percent to as little as 10 percent—a claim not disputed by the Kissinger Commission, and a point surely in its favor.

Low incomes by contemporary international standards would not be an insuperable obstacle to democratization if income, wealth, and other advantages were distributed with a fair degree of equality. In 1832, when Tocqueville expressed admiration for the "equality of condition" he observed in the United States among (white male) Americans, our per capita G.N.P. was roughly comparable to Nicaragua's and Guatemala's in 1978. But of course anything approaching equality of condition has been conspicuously lacking in the four Central American countries. None of them has a large, intermediate stratum of middle classes and professionals, or a class of independent farmers like those that made up the overwhelming proportion of the American population before the Civil War. Nor is there an equivalent to the large urban working classes that some European countries had in the nineteenth century. In England, France, Germany, and Sweden these workers fought successfully to expand voting rights. They were then incorporated into political life, won social welfare legislation that softened the harshness of early capitalism,

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and as a result gave their loyalty and support to democratic ideas and institutions. What middle class there is in Central America, at best a small percentage of the population, has been depleted in recent years by killings and emigration.

Because of poverty and extreme inequality in Central America, political life tends to be a zero sum game—with deadly consequences for losers. In the short run, the poor cannot do much to improve their lot except by forcing the wealthy to relinquish some of their possessions and privileges. This is a change the wealthy quite naturally will resist with all the coercive means available to them—mainly the police and the military forces. When the wealthy are overthrown, as in Nicaragua, attempts by the rich, and even the middle class, to win back political power are fiercely resisted.

PERHAPS EVEN these grave handicaps could be overcome if many people held political values that strongly supported the norms and practices of democracy. But a democratic culture anchored in what Tocqueville called "manners and mores"—practical experience, habits, opinions, beliefs— appears to be largely absent in these countries. Neither tradition nor the current values of ordinary people—peasants, workers, and shopkeepers—accept the validity and desirability of opposition parties and movements. Learning to tolerate organized opposition, and to protect its rights by law and constitution, was not easily or swiftly learned even in countries with a deeply ingrained sense of constitutionalism. In Britain it took the whole of the eighteenth century. There is little reason to think political toleration can emerge quickly in Central America.

One might be entitled to measured optimism, knowing that the vast bulk of the population were not strongly committed to democracy, if at least the elite groups—political, military, economic, and social—were. But this is not the case. In most of Central and South America, the military elites in particular lack any tradition of political neutrality. To the contrary, the military takes its dominance for granted. Its function is not to fight wars, but to maintain regimes and to provide career opportunities. In the Salvadoran military these opportunities include money and corruption. (See "Dreamwork" by Leonel Gómez Videz, TNR, June 6, 1983.) The constant threat of intervention by the military in political life allows little space for the growth of democratic institutions.

To be sure, some of the leaders of these countries may master enough of a political patois to reassure delegations of visiting Americans that they are prepared to march down the road to democracy—as soon as all the Marxist-Leninists are annihilated. As in El Salvador, elections may be held. As in Honduras, fledgling democratic institutions may even begin to emerge. But it would be a mistake to take these events as signs that these institutions are likely to grow strong enough to withstand the stresses that Central American societies are bound to undergo.

If the rights and institutions necessary to democracy were to develop, then opposition movements would swiftly enter the political arena. Inevitably these would include parties advocating socialist programs, some of which would adhere to a Marxist-Leninist ideology. Is it likely that the Salvadoran or Guatemalan military would permit these fragile institutions to stand in its way? Will the Sandinista directorate in Nicaragua really permit opposition parties to contest its control in genuinely free elections?

The Kissinger Commission's solutions seem to boil down to recommendations that "the United States expand economic assistance for democratic institutions and leadership training," and that the United States continue to pursue the magic of economic development. But the first is so anemic in its details—expanding exchange programs and encouraging "neighborhood groups, community improvement organizations, and cooperatives"—that one senses it results from a despairing search for something, anything, to offer. The second is, at best, slow and difficult to achieve, and won't necessarily lead to democracy in the short run, or indeed for many years.

It would be little short of irresponsible to build U.S. policy on the assumption that in the near future—the next decade, say—these countries will have acquired stable, moderate, regimes. It would be far more realistic to assume that they might very well continue to be dictatorships of one sort or another—military, nationalist, Marxist-Leninist. Based on this assumption, then, what should American policy be?

Arguably, the United States has *had* a consistent policy, which for many years was not contested. As the report acknowledges—albeit somewhat tepidly—for most of this century the U.S. government has given its support to right-wing authoritarian regimes in Latin America, typically military dictatorships, and actively opposed left-wing governments, whether democratically elected or not. One might think that we could now put this deplorable history behind us and do what we should have done all along: stand firmly on the side of democratic forces in this hemisphere, and when the need arises give them military assistance. But even if this change were to occur soon, it would take decades of uncharacteristically steady policy before many Latin Americans, or, for that matter, many well-informed North Americans, would be convinced of the United States' benign intentions.

NONETHELESS, it is worth considering what policies this country might adopt if it really wished to promote the gradual evolution of democratic institutions in Latin America. The United States would do well to begin with the premise that the countries of Latin America vary enormously, that authoritarian regimes in Central America and South America vary greatly, and that the differences matter. No overarching policy can be applied mechanically to the whole region, or even to Central America. A general policy must be adapted pragmatically to time, country, circumstance, and opportunities.

This cautionary note should also lead the United States to stop treating political and intellectual elites in Latin America as if they were backward country cousins, not

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quite capable of understanding the realities of the world. It is a reasonable assumption that the president and foreign minister of Mexico, for example, know more about their Central American neighbors than the President of the United States and his Secretary of State. Political leaders in the democratic and quasi-democratic countries of Latin America are likely to have a better understanding of the limits and possibilities of democratization than our own leaders, and as much or more interest in bringing it about.

The United States should operate on the assumption that the primary function of Latin American military forces is not to protect their country from foreign aggression or to fight wars, but to act as a political force aiming to inhibit, contain, or destroy political opponents. With few exceptions—such as the Peruvian military regime from 1968 to 1980—military leaders have sought to prevent major structural reforms that might imperil the wealth, privileges, or power of existing elites. Consequently, it would be wise to furnish military aid in Latin America only to the few countries with established democratic regimes, like Costa Rica, and then only when the request is initiated by the political leadership.

THIS WILL require distinguishing sharply between words and practices. Since World War II, nearly all authoritarian regimes in Latin America have given lip service to democratic ideals by presenting themselves as governments in transition to popular rule. It is testimony to the strength of the ideal, if not the practice, of democracy in Latin America that military dictatorships believe this affirmation is necessary for domestic and international legitimacy. American policymakers have also found this linguistic façade useful for concealing their own policies. The effect has been to undercut democratic forces in Latin America, and to strengthen their cynicism about U.S. commitments. What has been a weakness could, however, become a strength: we could start demanding that leaders in these countries live up to the claims on which, to some extent, their own legitimacy depends.

To do this we could make all American nonmilitary aid contingent on fulfilling two conditions. First, a country should demonstrate that within, say, four years after assistance is begun, it has made definite improvement in the welfare of the bottom third of the population, as measured by life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, housing, literacy, levels of schooling attained, and so on. Unless there has been improvement, aid would stop entirely.

Second, assistance should be clearly understood to depend on a country achieving within a definite time the democratic guarantees that are most conspicuously lacking. The goals will, of course, vary from country to country; the point is that each will have a timetable within which to make improvements or forfeit U.S. aid. It is foolish, for example, to expect that elections alone will bring democracy to El Salvador so long as the government cannot or will not provide the most elementary guarantees of fair trial and effective protection against arbitrary seizure, torture, and killing. The Salvadoran government should have been presented long ago with the unambiguous message that unless it provided these guarantees, aid would be cut off, elections or no.

IT IS hard to say whether a more flexible U.S. policy would help to induce the Nicaraguan leaders to take steps toward political democratization. But since our confrontationist policy with Cuba has wholly failed, as it is likely to fail in Nicaragua, it would be worth a try. (Though the Sandinistas have promised to hold elections, there is little reason to believe that these elections will lead to American or Western European styles of government.) If economic aid according to the conditions described above will not work, perhaps we should attempt benign neglect.

Finally, the United States must confront the security issue directly. The main justification for our military intervention in Central America comes down to the assumption that, given the opportunity by revolutionary regimes, the Soviets or their agents, the Cubans, would attempt to endanger the security of the United States by building missile bases, submarine pens, or similar installations. Yet it is scarcely credible that the Soviet leaders would take an action that would add little to their present capacity to destroy the United States, and would create a confrontation as dangerous as the Cuban missile crisis. One must also assume that Soviet leaders would believe either that their construction activities would not be detected by the United States; or would not be interrupted by American action long before their completion. Surely neither of these is true. If and when construction were to near completion on missile sites or equally threatening installations, clearly the threat would be removed—by diplomacy, one hopes, but if necessary by military force, probably in much the same way that Israel destroyed Iraq's nuclear installation in 1981.

To state clearly what is, after all, the present and future national security policy toward Central America would not confer more power on the President to do mischief, at least no more than he already possesses. It might therefore be useful if Congress were to reaffirm our standing policy on hemispheric security—by a joint resolution, for example—and at the same time declare its intention to supervise the interpretation of the policy. Because of the lead time that construction of military facilities provides, Congress should demand adequate verification—scrutiny by appropriate committees—of photographic and other evidence about installations. An Administration that discovered a potential bomber base in Grenada's attempt to accommodate larger commercial jets is hardly to be trusted to determine unilaterally that a given construction site is intended as a station for bombers or missiles.

The Reagan Administration has shown no signs of radically changing its policies in Central America. If a Democratic President is elected in November, will he be likely to do so? Perhaps not. But a new Administration might make a fresh start by discarding the hope that these countries will make prompt and tidy transitions to democracy in the foreseeable future.

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Stability in southern Africa?

PAX PRETORIANA

BY JOHN DE ST. JORRE

Cape Town

SOMETHING CURIOUS is going on in southern Africa. Black Marxists are drinking cocktails with Afrikaner officials. United States diplomats are basking in praise on both sides of the color divide. Peace rather than brimstone is in the antipodean summer air. For the last month or so, American diplomacy has been engaged in a high-wire act aimed at simultaneously easing the Cubans out of Angola and the South Africans out of Namibia, improving U.S. ties with Marxist Mozambique and Angola, and whittling down Soviet influence in the region. Africa, traditionally the poor relation of U.S. diplomacy, now ironically offers the Reagan Administration its one realistic chance of a foreign policy success before the election.

It is an enormously ambitious enterprise. If it succeeds, it will give the Administration a significant diplomatic victory and will be a personal triumph for its architect, Chester Crocker, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. If it fails, the fragile peace that has settled on the region will be shattered, Soviet and Cuban influence will wax instead of wane, the United States—always on the margin—will become virtually irrelevant, and President Reagan's scoreboard of foreign successes will continue to register a resounding zero.

The fragility of the diplomacy is underscored by the United States' lack of real power in the process. Apart from the offer of closer diplomatic ties and economic aid, U.S. leverage is limited. Its role is that of broker rather than mover-and-shaker. That title sits firmly on the shoulders of South Africa, whose ruthless military, political, and economic pressures on its black neighbors brought them first to their knees and then to the negotiating table. If peace descends on the region it will not be an American peace, it will be a Pax Pretoriana.

There are three acts in the drama, and the curtain has just risen on the first. Act One envisages a successful military disengagement in southern Angola in which South African forces will withdraw to the Namibian side of the border. Angola will ensure that the vacuum is not filled either by its Cuban allies or by SWAPO guerrillas who have been fighting for Namibia's independence for almost two decades. A joint monitoring commission of Angolan and South African officials has been created to observe the pact, and a small delegation of U.S. diplomats has set up shop in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, to provide backup support if needed.

SWAPO's president, Sam Nujoma, has promised to respect the pact. The other major actor, Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, the dissident Angolan group that has been locked in a struggle with the Angolan government since the country's independence from Portugal in 1975, has also agreed not to move into the cease-fire zone.

Act Two, assuming that all goes according to plan, has a more complex story line. The Reagan Administration has linked the decolonization of Namibia by South Africa with the removal of the twenty-five thousand Cuban troops from Angola. Act Two will be the time for some hard decision making by President José dos Santos's M.P.L.A. government in Luanda and Prime Minister P. W. Botha's government in Pretoria. The Angolans will have to commit themselves to saying goodbye to the Cuban combat forces, which have helped them to maintain power for the last nine years; and South Africa will have to decide whether or not to hand over the huge but sparsely populated buffer state which it seized from the Germans in the First World War and has held ever since.

If both sides take the plunge, the Angolan government will face the formidable Savimbi alone, and the South Africans will have to accept United Nations-supervised elections in Namibia, which will almost certainly lead to a SWAPO victory in Windhoek and another black radical state on their borders.

Act Three will inevitably be something of an anticlimax, assuming the players do not walk off the stage in Act Two. It will see an end to the hostilities within Namibia, the arrival of a multinational U.N. military group, a gradual pullback of South African forces, and, after seven months of open politicking, the holding of elections for a constituent assembly, the writing of a constitution, and the hoisting of a new flag over Windhoek. At the same time most, if not all, the Cuban troops in Angola will sail off into the sunset, and the United States will ring down the curtain by recognizing the Angolan government, thus opening the door to U.S. economic aid to help rebuild Angola's shattered economy.

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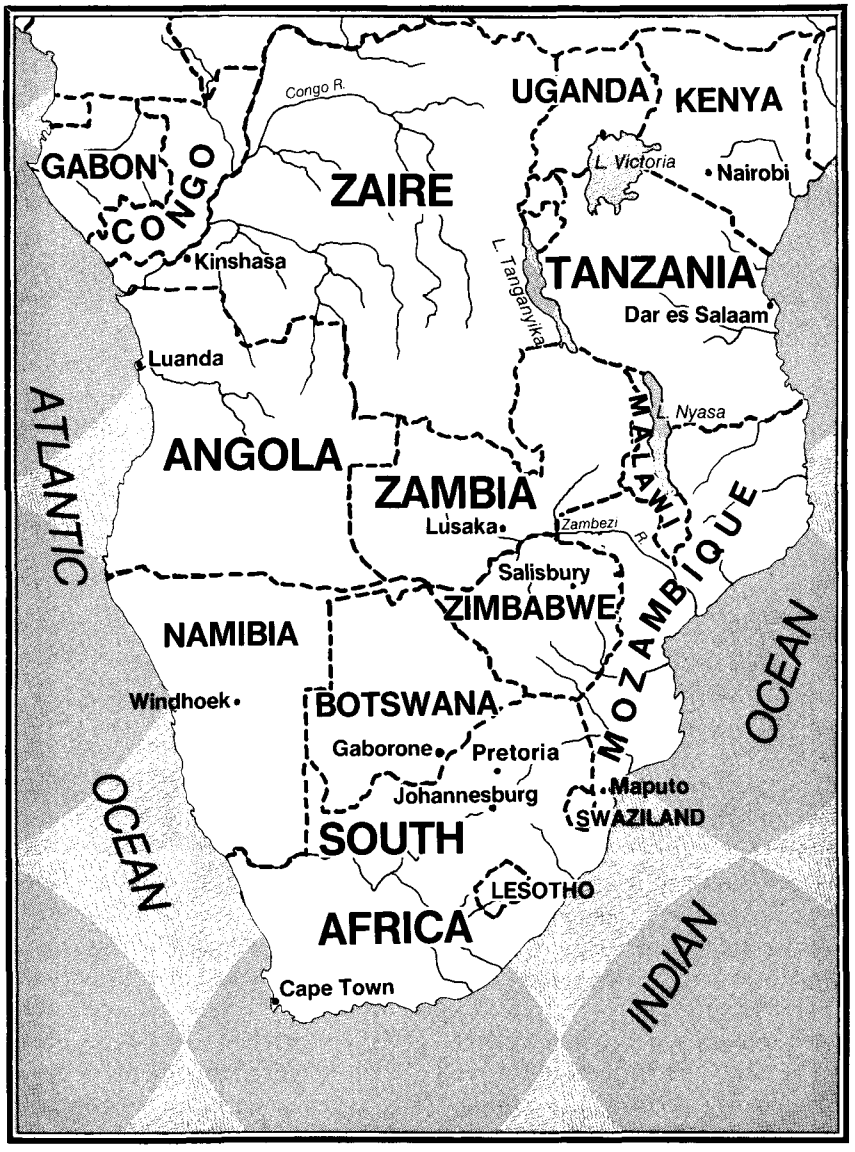
The breathing of new life into this scenario has caught many people by surprise, not least the conservative and liberal opponents of Crocker's strategy of "constructive engagement." Senator Jesse Helms, the Heritage Foundation, and others on the right see a sellout of Savimbi's UNITA and Holden Roberto's F.N.L.A., the other, much smaller pro-Western Angolan dissident movement; and they bitterly oppose the prospect of U.S. diplomatic recognition of the Marxist M.P.L.A. government in Luanda.

Liberals are more confused than angry. They have roundly condemned Crocker's policy as morally wrong for having produced a "tilt" toward Pretoria. Yet Namibia's independence has always been high on their agenda, so they are a little shaken to see Crocker's strategy of cozying up to the South African government beginning to produce diplomatic results. Their genuine desire for Namibia's independence now sits uncomfortably with the possibility that it could be brought about by their Republican opponents using a strategy they have universally condemned as immoral and unworkable. Left-wing criticism has also been muted by the vision of southern Africa's black Marxist leaders striking deals with the detested apartheid regime in Pretoria. The old racial and ideological lines, so clear in the past, have suddenly started to wobble. It is all very puzzling.



MAP OF SOUTHERN AFRICA BY KENNY GRADY

There is an important prologue to the events now taking shape. For the last three years South Africa has been exerting pressure on its black neighbors in a systematic and relentless process of destabilization. The fact that Pretoria went about this self-appointed task without any serious impediment from the United States, if without any encouragement either, suggests that Crocker's policy might have been engaged but was not very constructive during that period. On the other hand, there is no way of knowing if the South Africans would have curbed their aggressive tendencies had there been a sterner and more hostile government in Washington. They might have gone ahead anyway.

The aim of South Africa's strategy was to destroy the capability of its black revolutionary opponents, SWAPO in Namibia and Angola, and the African National Congress (A.N.C.) elsewhere in the region. Cross-border raids, military support for dissident movements, dirty tricks (such as letter bombs and assassinations), and throttling its neighbors' vital economic lifelines had, in sum, a devastating effect. One by one, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and finally Angola, have swallowed their pride if not their principles and genuflected before the regional superpower.

Some of the deals now being struck are similar to previous, more tacit arrangements. Zimbabwe, for instance, has closer economic ties and security connections with South Africa than ever, although the political gap appears unbridgeable. Business with the South Africans is always handled by civil servants. Prime Minister Robert Mugabe refuses to allow government ministers to take part despite constant South African invitations and blandishments.

Mugabe also maintains a high level of anti-South African rhetoric in his speeches and in the state-run media. The smaller states—Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana—all have official links with South Africa, but sustain a public anti-apartheid stance and have withheld diplomatic recognition of the white-ruled Republic.

But there has been a major change in Mozambique,

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formerly South Africa's most radical and implacable neighbor. President Samora Machel's FRELIMO government is not only talking to the South Africans at the highest level but is also mapping out a long-term relationship with an eagerness verging on enthusiasm.

The key element in the package currently is security. In return for South Africa cutting off aid to the dissident Mozambique National Resistance movement (M.N.R.), which has been ravaging large areas of the country, the Mozambique government has contracted to curb the activities of the A.N.C. inside Mozambique. Other issues include South African technical and economic assistance, the expanded use of hydroelectric power from Mozambique's Cabora Bassa dam, and the revival, improbable though it may seem, of South African tourism in Mozambique. Diplomatic relations appear unlikely, but Mozambique is ready to sign some form of nonaggression pact with South Africa. It is not exactly a southern African "Camp David," but it is still a remarkable turn of events.

WHAT HAPPENED? The short answer is that Machel had no alternative. Virtually every known natural and man-made disaster has struck Mozambique: droughts, cyclones, floods; botched social and economic policies; a chronic shortage of skilled manpower (ever since the Portuguese left en masse at independence); a drop in world prices for the country's agricultural exports; and the cancerous armed rebellion, backed by South Africa, that threatened the survival of the government. Machel first tried to get help from everyone but the South Africans. He went to Moscow to solicit his Soviet friends. They replied that they could afford no more than they were already giving him (arms, heavy machinery, food, and fuel). A tour of Western Europe produced little of substance. Portugal, the former colonial power, was ready to provide technical assistance, but had no cash to spare. The Cubans were a possibility—both as soldiers and as technicians—but South Africa made it very clear it would not permit a Cuban presence on terrain so close to its own.

That left the Americans. Relations had risen from rock bottom early in the Reagan period, when four members of the U.S. Embassy in Maputo were thrown out as alleged spies, and the Mozambicans credit Frank Wisner, Crocker's deputy and point man with the Africans, with much of the improvement. But the United States had a price: Mozambique would have to mend its fences with South Africa first and then American aid could follow. (There is speculation that a $200 million aid package, plus food aid, over a four-year period was dangled in front of the Mozambican government.) Machel's revolutionary party, FRELIMO, debated and agonized over its limited choices. Finally Machel agreed to do what the Americans and the South Africans asked of him.

If the Mozambican-South African relationship can now be characterized as friendly, the feeling in Maputo toward the United States has the overtones of a love affair. Two senior officials there told me recently they were praying for a Reagan victory in the U.S. election in November. One wonders what the two Jesses—Helms and Jackson—will make of that.

THERE IS a psychological, though not a physical, connection between the Mozambican-South African détente on the eastern flank of the region with the infinitely more complicated negotiations going on in the west. The genesis is identical. First, the South African hammer (the most recent punitive incursion into Angola only ended in January); then the American sweet talk behind the scenes; and, finally, face-to-face talks between the main parties, hosted by President Kaunda of Zambia in Lusaka.

But in Angola the mutual mistrust is palpable and the whole exercise immensely fragile. There seems little doubt, however, that both Angola and South Africa are ready for a military disengagement in the south of the country, Act One of Crocker's script. In Angola the growing power of Savimbi's UNITA movement, which is striking boldly beyond its traditional home base in the southeast, and the country's parlous economic condition have convinced the government it is time to talk.

On the South African side, P. W. Botha, in a key speech to parliament on January 31, made it clear that if there were a choice between the interests of South Africa and those of Namibia, he would put South Africa first. He also stressed that there was no long-term military solution to the problem, that Namibia imposed a heavy financial burden on the Republic, which is passing through its worst economic crisis since the 1930s depression, and that it was time the internal parties in Namibia got their act together. Although there is nothing intrinsically new in all this, the tone and urgency of the prime minister's remarks have impressed observers in South Africa that the government is gearing itself, as well as educating the public, for an eventual Namibian withdrawal.

There are some other straws in the wind indicating a shift of attitude. Botha's own political fortunes, after his impressive victory in the constitutional referendum last November, have brightened while the threat from the right wing of Afrikanerdom has correspondingly diminished. The number of Afrikaners in Namibia, a potentially dangerous right-wing fifth column, has declined considerably in recent years. Moreover, Botha himself appears to have lost patience with the place; and he is obsessed, according to some of his close advisers, with his new constitution, which will extend some limited political power to the Coloured and Indian communities and will be inaugurated later this year.

Another development has been the realization that the South African Army, for all its bravado and upbeat campaign assessments, cannot eradicate SWAPO. The last incursion into Angola, Operation Askari, was less than a total success. SWAPO's rainy season offensive was certainly blunted and many of the guerrillas driven farther north, but most lived to fight another day. Meanwhile, the South

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Africans suffered their highest casualties ever (over 10 percent of their force, if the conventional military tally for ten injured for every person killed is used) in unprecedented clashes with the Angolan Army and Cuban forces. There was also a questioning of the war in the Afrikaans press, especially by mothers asking why their sons were fighting and dying so far away from home.

That is not to say the government had made a final decision. The army appears unhappy at the idea of giving up so much military real estate where it has built up an elaborate infrastructure and whence it can launch attacks against its enemies at a safe distance from South Africa's own borders. General Magnus Malan, the minister of defense, accompanied by five generals, had to visit troops in the border areas to explain the political directives of the government and ensure that they were obeyed.

Of course, Pretoria does not have to make an irreversible decision until Act Two is reached, and the Angolans have produced their calendar for the Cuban withdrawal. Both Washington and Pretoria have reiterated many times that South Africa cannot be expected to hand over Namibia to U.N.-supervised elections until the Angolans have agreed to dispense with the Cubans.

What are the chances of the curtain ringing down on Act One and rising again on Act Two? The good news is that the South Africans and Angolans are now on the ground in southern Angola monitoring the South African withdrawal. Reports of SWAPO guerrillas moving south through the area are being investigated. The small U.S. team of mediators is established in Windhoek. South Africa has also recently released a longtime Namibian nationalist leader, Herman Toivo ja Toivo, one of the founders of SWAPO, after sixteen years in jail.

BUT THERE is a long way to go. There are other parties, the most important and potentially disruptive being Savimbi's UNITA movement, which has not yet been offered anything. Though Savimbi has promised not to move into the area vacated by South African troops in southern Angola, he has continued his operations elsewhere. And, as if to underline Savimbi's pivotal position, UNITA kidnapped seventy-seven foreigners in a diamond mining town in the northeast shortly after the Angolans and South Africans met in Lusaka.

UNITA is a much more formidable outfit than the dissident M.N.R. group in Mozambique. Even if the South Africans cut off all support, Savimbi, who has spent almost two decades in the bush fighting first the Portuguese and later the M.P.L.A. government, could survive. With strong Ovimbundu support (about 40 percent of the country's population), some help from other foreign friends (Morocco and Zaire, for example), and an effective and loyal movement behind him, he could continue to pose a serious threat to the Angolan government. Further, the disadvantage of losing South African support would be more than offset, assuming Act Two has run its course, by the Angolan government's loss of its Cuban allies.

The obvious solution would be for a rapprochement between the M.P.L.A. and UNITA, resulting in some form of coalition government in Luanda. This is clearly what the South Africans would like. Their man in Luanda would be the best insurance that the Cubans would not be invited back. The Americans would also welcome a coalition. It would blunt the attack of their right-wing domestic critics because the Angolan government would no longer be wholly Marxist. But the animosity toward Savimbi runs deep in Luanda, and the M.P.L.A. government has neither the strong leadership nor the same unity that is found on the other side of the continent in Maputo. A coalition therefore seems unlikely, and that means UNITA remains a loose gun on the stage.

THERE ARE others who are not happy about what is going on, notably the Soviets and the Cubans, neither of whom wants to hand the United States a diplomatic victory or lose influence with long-established African friends. However, they cannot compete with American offers of aid (a package is almost certainly in the pipeline for Angola, as well as Mozambique, if all goes well), and they are aware that their influence is limited by African sensitivities about their sovereignty. The Soviet relationship with Mozambique seems more balanced than with Angola where, after boosting the government's feeble military capability last fall, and bluntly warning the South Africans to curb their military activities, Moscow now appears upset at not being properly briefed on Angola's role in the sudden burst of diplomacy.

Unlike its displays of unwarranted optimism for a Namibian settlement in the past, the Administration is stressing the delicacy of the negotiations and the many obstacles yet to be overcome. The whole thing could unravel at any moment, threatening the Mozambican-South African dialogue as well.

Three developments are already causing concern. First, South Africa's withdrawal from southern Angola is behind schedule and is proceeding at a snail's pace. Second, SWAPO insurgent activity inside Namibia has markedly increased. Finally, Pretoria has recently proposed a roundtable conference of *all* the parties in Namibia and Angola, a move that took the United States by surprise, and appears to be aimed at eliminating the U.N.'s role, which would drastically alter Acts Two and Three. Crocker, it seems, is not the only scriptwriter in town.

And even if Crocker pulls it off, there is the question of longer-term stability in southern Africa. An independent Namibia will end SWAPO's long struggle, but the A.N.C. of South Africa is not going to give up simply because it has been deprived of some of its forward support. There is also another danger. People who are forced to go down on their knees to sue for peace tend neither to forget nor to forgive the humiliation. Morover, apartheid within South Africa is still alive and well despite some reformist modifications. Pax Pretoriana may look logical on the surface, but it is riddled with internal contradictions. Although it may produce a temporary rapprochement in the region, it is unlikely to usher in an era of permanent peace.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Looking to the Left

Seeing Red is a well-made, 100-minute documentary, consisting mostly of interviews with surviving members and ex-members of the American Communist Party who joined during the 1930s. The filmmakers are James Klein and Julia Reichert, who previously did *Union Maids*, moving stories of the struggles to organize unions during the Depression, told by some of the women involved. At least one of those women is in the new film. For one viewer who is a contemporary of that woman and the other people in *Seeing Red*, the film had an especially immediate effect, so perhaps a few personal notes may be allowed.

Seeing Red
(Heartland Productions)

My own activity in support of the American Communist Party is quickly recounted. In the mid-1930s, Earl Browder, then head of the party, came to lecture at New York University, where I was a student. He spoke in a large theater. I arranged the lights and handled the curtain for his talk (of which I recall nothing but his Kansas accent). I was paid for my collaboration—not with Moscow gold but with university work-study funds.

That's it. The following May Day I was watching the immense Communist parade in Union Square when a couple of friends marched by and saw me on the curb. With a vehemence they must have learned from Soviet films, they called to me: "Intellectuals! Join our ranks!" Although tempted, as I had been recurringly tempted through the decade, I didn't join; I hadn't joined during my college years, and I stayed out until the temptation was dispelled. But my abstention was mostly a matter of luck. Not perception or prescience kept me out, not lack of interest in Marx or the world's troubles, only the fact that I was thoroughly engaged in other (nonpolitical) activity.

Still, from the time that I could begin to read and think politically, which was in the early 1930s, it seemed to me, as to almost all politically aware young people I knew, that the world faced only two alternatives: communism and fascism. Smile now if you like; it wasn't funny then, and it didn't seem remotely simplistic. The grinding of the Depression was all around us, in our homes and in the streets; the seemingly unstoppable rise of Italian and German fascism chilled our blood. (No one who did not witness that rise can truly know what it felt like.) When the Spanish Civil War erupted, I even looked into the possibility of joining the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to fight Franco. Creeping cowardice and parental horror deterred me, and, in this case, I've always been glad of both; but my impulse was a symptom of the time.

My recurrent temptation to join the party, from which other obligations protected me, evanesced toward the end of the decade. It's usually said that the first great disillusionment with communism was the German-Soviet pact of August 1939. My own shock came a bit earlier, with the verbatim report of the so-called Moscow trials in 1938. This eight-hundred-page book was published in English (presumably in other languages, too) by the Soviet government, apparently with pride; but it prepared me for the brutal expediency of the pact that came along soon after. Those American members of the party who survived both those shocks were, of course, confirmed in fervor when the Axis powers invaded the U.S.S.R. in June 1941. The heat of the war, with the Soviets as our allies and with the unsurpassed heroism of their forces, burned away political differences.

After the war, the various depredations of the Soviet government soon sharply restored those differences. Americans who remained members of the Communist Party seemed deformed by habit rather than courageous, no matter how much one despised the McCarthyism deployed against them. *Seeing Red* says that Khrushchev's "revelations" about Stalin in June 1956 caused 80 percent of the American party membership to drop out. I don't see a great deal of difference in intellectual or moral clarity between those who waited until then to drop out and those who remained.

However, none of this can seriously derogate the party enthusiasms of the early and middle 1930s: when support of exploited workers and farmers, campaigns against racial discrimination, organization against fascism, seemed to be led by Communists: when allegations of Moscow influence seemed either capitalist fantasy or, if true, quite logical. (After all, the influence of Hitler was terrifyingly present on the streets of Yorkville and at gigantic, uniformed rallies; why shouldn't the Soviet Union have wanted to countervail them?) The best hope for a humane future could easily be thought to rest with communism. For a localized example, look at *The Compound Cinema*, a collection of film criticism by Harry Alan Potamkin. He was a critic of exceptional mind and sensibility who wrote for only six years: he died in 1933 at the age of 33. In the first three years, his work was largely

FILMS WORTH SEEING

And the Ship Sails On. Fellini's maritime allegory. In 1914 a luxury liner, on an odd voyage, dramatizes fates and futures. Gorgeous, humorous, poignant. (Reviewed 2/13/84)

Le Crabe Tambour. French, also at sea a lot, but naval and proud. Story strong despite diffusion; Raoul Coutard's cinematography a contender for world honors. (3/12/84)

Entre Nous. France, 1942 and 1952. Delicate if morally unsettling triangle story, unusually well made. (2/27/84)

Tender Mercies. Mercifully back again. Robert Duvall and fellow actors fine in Horton Foote's screenplay about a busted Texas country singer who recovers as far as he wants to. (4/11/83)

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apolitical; with the onslaught of the Depression, he became a fiery Communist. His subsequent work was considerably burdened with doctrine and polemic (though it's far from worthless), and it has become the common opinion to dismiss all of his work, to dismiss Potamkin himself as a party hack. I see him rather as a valuable man who responded quite understandably to a change of climate, then had the ill fortune to die before he could go on to other responses. There are plentiful examples of artists and intellectuals who went through Potamkin's Stages One and Two, then lived to go through later stages; Potamkin's career was frozen by mortality in Stage Two. Because he didn't have the chance to go through those later stages, he is fixed in the historical moment of embracing communism as possibility, an embrace that I, only by dumb luck, escaped.

That leads to a salient omission in *Seeing Red*. I wouldn't have expected the film to be anything like a complete history, even a rounded synoptic history, of the party in the years covered. But it concentrates on workers and on people involved in labor movements and social work. Very few former or present Communist intellectuals are heard from. The omission makes even this little chronicle lopsided. In terms of visibility (at the time) and continuity (through histories), even an overview is impossible without some real knowledge of what artists and intellectuals were doing, saying, accepting at the time in relation to the party. Communist activity in aid of the poor and oppressed was clear and indisputable; in other fields, the activity was sometimes shadowy but equally indisputable. For example, it's not known generally or remembered widely that the party had a sort of cultural commissar—named V. J. Jerome—who wielded power through threats of party boycott. One instance of his power: John Houseman (as he himself tells it in *Run-Through*), along with Orson Welles, agreed to make changes in their 1938 production of *Danton's Death* to placate Jerome.

Seeing Red was intended, like some recent books, to explore the utterly humane motives that impelled people to become Communists in the 1930s. It may also have intended to redress the past emphasis on artistic-intellectual Communist matters by concentrating on labor and social workers. But this concentration prevents the film from conveying the two criticisms which Klein has said that he and Reichert wanted to make: American Communists blindly followed another country's orders; the party was hierarchical and despotic. Almost all the people interviewed in *Seeing Red* either don't yet know those two points or won't discuss them.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

A Polish Political Fable

Janusz Glowacki's *Cinders* is another interesting but flawed entry in the mini-festival of Eastern European plays being presented by Joe Papp at the Public Theater. Like *A Private View* by the dissident Czech Vaclav Havel, this allegory by a defecting Polish dramatist is deeply engaged and passionately felt—a rebuke to the political insularity, moral limpness, and careerist motives of much American theater writing. But also like Havel, Glowacki has not proved able to square his ideological designs with his dramaturgical procedures. I am again uncomfortable being obliged to apply aesthetic judgments to a work that took courage to publish, but *Cinders* is further proof that those who write under totalitarianism sometimes have difficulty developing a convincing anecdote and an appropriate style.

Cinders takes place in a reformatory for girls near Warsaw, presided over by a weak humanitarian Principal about to be replaced by an ambitious and ruthless Deputy. The girls are in the process of rehearsing a school play, a dramatization of *Cinderella*, and a professional filmmaker has come to shoot a documentary of the rehearsal process while interviewing the inmates about their personal histories. The film, intended

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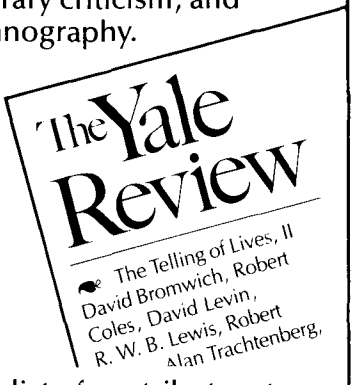

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for wide distribution, is meant to "shake up those bleeding hearts in the West," though it is unspecified how the true confessions of female thieves and hookers, intercut with scenes from a poorly dramatized fairy story, might influence the thinking of large Western audiences or make its director famous. Nevertheless, the filmmaker proceeds with his heartless on-camera interviews with the girls, recording squalid stories of incestuous relationships, robbery, rape, and violence. All in turn affirm that while Hitler is the man who hurt them most, the man who helped them most is the Deputy.

The girl playing the part of Cinderella, however, refuses to be interviewed or participate, aside from performing her role. Rather like Garga in Brecht's *In the Jungle of Cities*, she will use silence as an expression of her individual freedom and personal autonomy. Naturally, such dissent must be snuffed out, and virtually everyone in the institution—including some of the girls, though not the Principal—conspires to force her into confession. It is to the Principal alone, however, that she tells her true story during a quiet moment of mutual self-exposure: she struck her stepfather when he, twenty years younger than her mother, tried to force himself on her. She, in turn, advises the Principal to become reconciled with his estranged and erring wife, and the two of them, slowly, wanly, back into the only truly human relationship in the entire play.

But it is the Deputy who has the real authority in this institution, and he is determined that Cinderella will either cooperate with the filmmaker or be smashed by the system. When she continues her passive resistance, the Deputy plants the filmmaker's watch under her pillow, and when this effort to discredit her fails, spreads the rumor that she is a "squealer," thus contriving to have her dealt with harshly by her own fellow inmates.

While engineering this plan, the Deputy listens admiringly to a melancholy song by the inmates about their lonely life in the reformatory, then proceeds to introduce revisions that totally alter the mood and content of the music and lyrics. "Just because it's a cell, why does it immediately have to be dark? . . . The cell should be bright . . . because this kind of pessimism is really uncalled for—it stems from an ignorance of our ever-improving prison system." Before long, such phrases as "shed my tears for wasted years" have been changed into "shed my *fears* for future *years*," and a gloomy lament has evolved into a cheerful, affirmative, handclapping anthem. The girls respond to these suggestions like malleable lumps of dough, and they are equally unresistant when the Deputy insinuates suspicions about Cinderella's treachery. In a climactic scene, they fall upon her and beat her savagely, while the Principal, pinned to the ground, helplessly witnesses the mayhem. As the camera grinds away remorselessly, Cinderella cuts her wrists and expires on the floor.

IT IS A HEAVY-handed conclusion to a generally leaden story, where the pressures of allegory sometimes force the dramatist into unconvincing strategies. I may be missing something, but I don't understand the significance of the Cinderella fable to the theatrical story. I also find it highly improbable that a group of hard-bitten reformatory inmates would consent to enact a fairy tale as a school play—a piece by Genet would be more likely—but Glowacki apparently chose this device because of its (rather obscure) parallels to his political allegory. Then again, certain key scenes—Cinderella's conversation with the Principal, the Deputy's reworking of the song, a nocturnal abduction for sexual purposes of two girls by the Deputy and the filmmaker—are either not credible in the context of the action or go on long after their ironies have been exhausted by the playwright. And the filmmaker's cold, detached recording of Cinderella's deterioration and death—so reminiscent of Robert Newton in *Odd Man Out* trying to catch on canvas the dying look in the eyes of the wounded James Mason—is too sketchily rendered to have much impact.

A different directorial approach might have illuminated the more enigmatic areas of the play or enhanced its sketchily written values, but John Madden's production, though generally well acted and designed, often compounds instead of solves the dramaturgical problems. Madden is capable of sensitive and meticulous staging, particularly with contemporary plays, but here he seems to sacrifice thematic clarity to theatrical pacing. The evening seems slick from the opening song—a well-rehearsed piece sung by the girls in three-part harmony—and it

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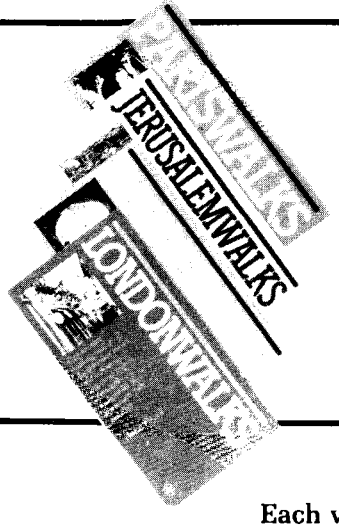

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doesn't improve through the whiz-bang interlapping of dialogue and scenes. What we are given is a glossy professionalism apparently intended to varnish over the untidiness of the writing, but if *Cinders* had been left a little rougher, and considerably more edged, its meaning might have emerged more convincingly.

Madden, on the other hand, has cast and rehearsed the actors very well, particularly the men. Christopher Walken, his hooded eyes obscured behind dark glasses, feinting and dodging around his equipment like a boxer in leather jacket and black turtleneck sweater, is alternately cocky and bewildered as the intrusive filmmaker—nothing this dangerous actor does is ever without interest. Robin Gammell as the Deputy provides a fine sneaky characterization of an invidious functionary on a cheerful ascent to power, rotating his head like a swivel as he makes a self-serving speech into an ambulatory camera. And George Guidall as the Principal gives moral strength to a sacrificial character, the man of conscience trying to preserve a bit of justice in a society of wolves.

Among the women, Lucinda Jenney, who looks a lot like Lindsay Crouse, does presentable work in a role that could use a little more of Crouse's grit, and Dori Hartley, alternating as Prince Charming in the fairy story and as the brawny lesbian inmate who terrorizes the girls, is the one actress in the company who behaves as if she might have done some time in a reformatory. Andrew Jackness's setting—a green-and-white linoleum floor with institutional furniture—is appropriately bare, and Jane Greenwood's costumes—grey smocks for the girls, limp bureaucratic suits for the men—demonstrate how even contemporary clothes can be an aid to character when created by a gifted designer.

But the play remains dense, opaque, strategic, overly contrived. Philip Roth has said, in a now celebrated statement, that in the West everything goes and nothing matters, while in the East nothing goes and everything matters. That the issues of *Cinders* matter is beyond dispute, but finding a way to express them under conditions of repression requires herculean gifts. Glowacki's style should either become more surreal or more credible, and he needs to trust his audience to recognize irony more quickly. Perhaps now that he has defected to the West, he will be able to put our unemployed theatrical freedom in the service of a more cogent purpose: the forceful presentation of a powerful political protest.

Reconsideration: Paul Celan

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A POEM

BY JOHN FELSTINER

VERY FEW lyric poems in this century have cut so deeply into consciousness and into conscience as to become historical agents themselves, provoking, dividing, and reshaping opinion, accumulating a biography of their own. A poem rarely has the effect of a judicial precedent or scientific experiment, upsetting assumptions and forcing new choices. Neruda's "United Fruit Co.," Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" come to mind, though they remain linked to their occasions. Owen's "Dulce et decorum est," Yeats's "Easter 1916" reach beyond their occasions. Yet I know of no lyric that might touch us so radically as Paul Celan's *Todesfuge*, "Deathfugue" (1944-45).

This poem gradually became a *cause célèbre* during the 1950s and 1960s. *Schwarze Milch der Fruhe wir trinken sie Abends*, "Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening": to mention Paul Celan would instantly evoke this opening line, which caught the Jews' unspeakable plight in a strikingly spoken metaphor, and in so doing, gave German readers a frisson of understanding that was not always earned or examined. The poem has occasionally formed a touchstone for "national guilt," "collective mourning," "coming to terms with the past," and "reparation"—ideas that have preoccupied Germany since its Nazi period.

WHAT HAD it taken to draw such an utterance from a 23-year-old? Born in 1920 in Czernowitz, Bukovina, the eastern outpost of the Austrian Empire until World War I, Celan grew up in a German-speaking Jewish milieu, learning Hebrew for his bar mitzvah and Rumanian at school. He resisted his father's Orthodox and Zionist persuasion, but circumstances soon showed the boy how Jewish he was. In 1934 he wrote to an aunt who had emigrated to Palestine: "I could write a 300-page opus about anti-Semitism in our school." After the Hitler-Stalin pact, Russian forces occupied Czernowitz and "reformed" the university. Then in 1941, Nazi and Rumanian troops set about burning, plundering, torturing, murdering, deporting thousands of Jews. One night in June, 1942 the ghetto was swept. Celan, an only child, hid with friends, and the next morning found his house boarded up and his parents gone. That winter he learned that both his father and mother, brutally exhausted in a camp on the southern Bug River, had been shot by the S.S. Celan himself, after a year and a half shoveling rocks in southeast Rumania, barely escaped execution, fled to the Soviet Army, and eventually returned to Czernowitz.

There, in late summer, 1944, standing outside the iron grillwork of the archiepiscopal cathedral in his occupied homeland, he read *Todesfuge* to a friend who had survived with his family in the same camp where Celan's parents perished. What then did it take for an orphan to voice such annihilation in his mother tongue, in the murderers' tongue? The German language, he later said, had to "pass through its own answerlessnesses, pass through a frightful muting, pass through the thousand darknesses of deathbringing speech." Yet it was all he had left: only his language "remained in the midst of the losses."

If the war brought German literature to its *Nullpunkt*, to its degree zero, then survivors like Celan had an even starker *Nullpunkt*, and *Todesfuge* finds words for

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that nullity. In 1944, relatives and friends were returning to Czernowitz from the camps, or not returning. He listened to horrifying stories. Perhaps if he had stayed with his parents in the ghetto and been deported to Transnistria, he could have saved them. Celan wrote *Todesfuge* in the first person, an intolerable yet obligatory voice: "we drink and we drink." "*Wir*" ("we") and "*uns*" ("us") occur twenty times in the poem, insisting that the victims be heard. The poet makes them speak, but, because they cannot speak, must speak for them.

What we know as *Todesfuge*, Celan originally entitled *Todestango*, "Tango of Death." In fact it was his first published poem, appearing not in German but in Petre Solomon's Rumanian translation, *Tangoul Mortii* (May 1947). Think of that sort of dance around black milk, graves, vipers, hounds, and you feel an added twist to Celan's irony. The tango fascinated Europe during his childhood, the late '20s and early '30s. To call *this* poem *Todestango* was to nullify everything in life that would be svelte, graceful, nonchalant.

Beneath the poem's stylized, cadenced lines and stunning metaphors, Celan had a matter of fact to build on. In the Janowska camp at Lemberg, Gali-

DEATHFUGUE

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening
we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night
we drink and we drink
we shovel a grave in the sky there it won't feel too cramped
A man lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes
he writes when it turns dusk to Deutschland your golden hair Marguerite
he writes it and steps out of doors and the stars are all twinkling
he whistles his hounds to come close
he whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground
he orders us strike up and play for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at morning and midday we drink you at evening
we drink and we drink
A man lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes
he writes when it turns dusk to Deutschland your golden hair Marguerite
your ashen hair Shulamith we shovel a grave in the sky
there it won't feel too cramped
He shouts jab the earth deeper you there you others sing up and play
he grabs for the rod in his belt he swings it his eyes are blue
jab your spades deeper you there you others play on for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at midday and morning we drink you at evening
we drink and we drink
a man lives in the house your goldenes Haar Marguerite
your aschenes Haar Shulamith he plays with his vipers
He shouts play death more sweetly Death is a master from Deutschland
he shouts scrape your strings darker you'll rise then in smoke to the sky
you'll have a grave then in the clouds there it won't feel too cramped

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at midday Death is a master aus Deutschland
we drink you at evening and morning we drink and we drink
Death is ein Meister aus Deutschland his eye is blue
he shoots you with shot made of lead shoots you level and true
a man lives in the house your goldenes Haar Margarete
he looses his hounds on us grants us a grave in the air
he plays with his vipers and daydreams der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland

dein goldenes Haar Margarete
dein aschenes Haar Sulamith

PAUL CELAN
translated by John Felstiner

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cia, not far from Czernowitz, an S.S. lieutenant ordered Jewish fiddlers to play a hit tango with a new refrain, called "Death Tango," during marches, tortures, grave-digging, executions. Before liquidating the camp, they shot all the orchestra. I've also seen a 1944 pamphlet on "The Lublin Extermination Camp" (i.e., Maidanek) by Konstantin Simonov, issued by Moscow's Foreign Languages Publishing House. In Russian-occupied Czernowitz, possibly Celan came across this pamphlet. Simonov recounts a mass death march toward the camp crematorium, endless columns five abreast, "holding each others' arms . . . Scores of loudspeakers began to emit the deafening strains of the fox-trot and the tango. And they blared all the morning, all day, all the evening, and all night."

PAUL CELAN BY WOLFGANG OSCHATZ

"Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening/we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night." These opening verses seem to hark back to Genesis—"and the evening and the morning were the first day"—so that Paul Celan's poem marks our century's anti-Creation. But it chastens imagination to hear, with Celan's ears, Simonov's 1944 account. Reality can swell to metaphorical excess and defy belief, as Celan's Rumanian editor recognized in 1947, advising his readership that *Tangoul Mortii* was "based upon data": in the Nazi camps, "some of the condemned were forced to play music while others dug graves." This prefatory caution against disbelief inaugurated the working history of Celan's poem.

Not long afterward he changed the title—a momentous change that has left readers shuttling between the poem's versification and its veracity. Having abandoned Czernowitz, Celan in Bucharest penciled out "*tango*" in a typescript of *Todestango* and substituted "*fuge*." Then in Vienna in 1948 he published his first book, setting apart *Todesfuge* as its concluding section. That change, from the Argentine dance to Bach's masterful complexity, has made all the difference. For though Celan's lines had all along formed a repetitive, overlapping, and dissonant counterpoint, to actually call them a fugue brought out their artfulness—however much he meant to bring out an inexorable force at work. In 1944, the classic form must have meant a frail stay against chaos. But all too soon *Todesfuge*'s musical construction, its play among verbal themes, diverted attention from the poem's real theme: that German fascism consummately orchestrated human annihilation.

For twenty years *Todesfuge* figured as a cultural obsession in Germany, a more durable if somewhat less fiery obsession than Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*. Hundreds of reviews, essays, memoirs, dissertations, critical books, anthologies, and teachers' guides, not to mention countless school and university classes, have dealt with the poem since 1952, when Celan first published it in Germany. To sample those responses yields a kind of morality play, wherein Art and History, imagination and reality, jostle for precedence.

"His lyrics are *poésie pure*, magical montage . . . They have French sheen and Balkan glitter, the suggestiveness of the *chanson* and the modulations of melancholy. They exist wholly on metaphor . . . Reality is transposed in the secret script of poesy!" All this in 1953 from the Christian poet Heinz Piontek, who urged Celan to publish only when "he has something to say which is really pressing him—but not his *études* and finger exercises." You would never know that *Todesfuge* was the main piece in the volume under review, which Celan entitled *Mohn und Gedächtnis*, "Poppy and Memory." Another review that year praised the poem's "enchantment," "lyrical alchemy," "Zen Buddhist satori-experience," "clever technique and beautiful imagery"—"A Celan poem is wholly without intention. It wants to be nothing but breath, sound, image, effortless and almost singable . . . Celan is a tender sculptor."

I imagine the poet at a newsstand in Paris, where he'd finally settled, looking this up in *Die Welt* and maybe having to remind himself what *Todesfuge* really said: "he whistles his hounds to come close/he whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground." Not every critic was enchanted away from the death camps by this poem's musical virtuosity. But even those who acknowledged Celan's subject usually stressed the "pure play" of his language, its "sovereign inner reality," its "unbridled fantasy." A well-known poet and critic, Hans Egon Holthusen, writing for the influential monthly *Merkur* less than two years after *Todesfuge* was published, could say that it had "already become famous." But what had not hit home was the paradox embedded in Celan's surrealistic genitive, "Fugue of Death." Holthusen applauds the poet for "singing one of the most

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ghastly and significant events in recent history . . . so that it escapes history's bloody chamber of horrors to rise into the ether of pure poetry." Who, I wonder, was really escaping?

With an ease that seemed indecent to Celan, *Todesfuge* was ensconced in anthologies during the '50s and, notably, in high school readers. Students would spend a few preliminary minutes on "content preparation," then go on assiduously to analyze the poem's prosody and structure. Having studied fugues in music class, they might each adopt a motif or voice to perform Celan's poem, "to make the polyphony audible"—with what effect, it's hard to know. One pedagogical journal does advise giving the class something historical first (but not about genocide—better Anne Frank's diary). And "the point is for this to happen before interpreting *Todesfuge*"—which seems reasonable enough, unless the point really is to get it all behind you, because "a consideration of *Todesfuge* could easily lapse into discussion of the persecution of the Jews."

Evidently Celan felt his own poem lapsing into a purely aesthetic niche. He insisted in 1958 that his poetry mistrusted "the 'melodiousness' which more or less untroubled still trips tunefully alongside the most frightful things." In Germany to accept the 1958 Bremen Prize, Celan made his speech show how desperate and purposive his writing was: "A poem can be a message in a bottle, sent out in the (not always greatly hopeful) belief that it may somewhere and sometime wash up on land." And that year he wrote to a critic: "For me what counts is truth, not euphony."

BY THE LATE '50s Celan's verse had shed its euphony, turning enigmatic and rhythmically constrained, its syntax ruptured from within by the pressure of unspeakable memory. In that vein he wrote a long sequel to *Todesfuge* which he called *Engführung* (1958), meaning "straitening," and also "stretto," the close overlap of voices at the end of a fugue:

Asche.
Asche, Asche.
Nacht.
Nacht-und-Nacht.

Here are the night and ashes of *Todesfuge*, now stripped of cadence and metaphor. Now only the narrowest art will do. Perhaps the earlier poem, despite its sarcasm about such German treasures as Heine's Lorelei, who "combs her golden hair"—perhaps *Todesfuge* did invite too congenial a reading. Nothing like it appears in Celan's lyrics during the '60s. They have instead a crystal cut and density that taxed (and dazzled) German readers.

FOR VARIOUS reasons Celan began turning down requests to anthologize *Todesfuge*, except for a 1960 collection of poetry on the Nazi years with "*Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland*" as epigraph. For one thing, he saw his hard-bought metaphors (the black milk, the grave in the clouds) too readily appreciated. Even Rolf Hochhuth, speculating on how to portray the horror of Auschwitz, remarked that *Todesfuge*'s "masterly" metaphors actually acted as a screen. And Celan reportedly told someone in 1966, "I don't musicalize anymore, as at the time of the much-touted *Todesfuge*, which by now has been threshed out in many a textbook." At the same time, he was suffering from a groundless, drawn-out plagiarism charge which the German press helped publicize. This campaign rubbed his nerves raw to whatever neo-Nazism and recrudescent anti-Semitism he perceived, and he shrank from being anthologized alongside German poets who had behaved dubiously during the war.

One nettle in particular afflicted Celan and clung to *Todesfuge* during the '50s and '60s. In 1951 and again in 1955 the German-Jewish sociologist Theodor Adorno, after years of refuge in the United States, published an essay containing the remark that has remained his most famous: "*Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch*," "After Auschwitz, to write a poem is barbaric." Then in a 1962 radio talk, published in 1965, he repeated that sentence and explained: "Through the aesthetic principle of stylization . . . an unimaginable fate still seems as if it had some meaning; it becomes transfigured, with something of the horror removed." Critics began applying this stricture to *Todesfuge*—not really, Celan thought, because the poem prettified Jewish suffering, but because it affronted German guilt. Soon Adorno's dictum was generally taken to refer to *Todesfuge*. The culminating insult came when a 1965 *Merkur* article questioned poetry not merely after but about Auschwitz: Celan's *Todesfuge* and its motifs, "all of them thoroughly composed in an elegant score—didn't that show far too much pleasure in art, in despair turned 'beautiful' through art?"

The poet who had his parents wrenched away overnight, and who barely survived eighteen months' forced labor, felt especially injured when German critics charged him with eliciting aesthetic pleasure from Auschwitz. A 1966 letter of Celan's mentions the *Merkur*, saying "now one finally knows where the barbarians are to be found." But in this case Adorno was not exactly responsible for his disciples. His first essay had been written originally in 1949, when he hadn't even heard of Celan. "*Nach Auschwitz . . .*" did not refer to *Todesfuge*, and Adorno's editor Rolf Tiedemann tells me that it was Celan's poetry itself which led Adorno in 1966 to recant specifically his famous dictum. Toward the end of his life, Adorno intended to write an essay on *Engführung*. He considered Celan the only authentic postwar writer to stand with Beckett.

DURING THE LATE '60s, more readers began hearing the bitter irony in *Todesfuge*. A 1968 East German collection on the persecution of the Jews included the poem, which also appeared in Germany's most popular school reader. Other critics harped on the usual themes. "Doesn't he reduce death," asked one man, "to a harmless wood-carving?" Another, seemingly sympathetic to Celan's later verse, called *Todesfuge* in 1970 "all too rhetorical." That same year a teachers' journal discovered in the syntax of *Todesfuge* "grief for the hangman," for "the victim of a system," and suggested that the poem's close—your golden hair Marguerite/your ashen hair Shulamith—couples the German and the Jewish ideals in "forgiveness," in a "loving meeting," rather than in the unresolvable chord that turns Shulamith to ashes. Celan's closing couplet, this article says, may also "recall to us the close of *Faust*": "the eternal feminine/draws us upward."

Celan was spared, as it happens, from contemplating these notions. By 1970, after treatments in a Paris mental hospital, he was living apart from his wife and son. He had visited Israel gratefully, yet he seemed reluctant to face its messianic demand. In March 1970 he had been let down sharply by an audience at the Hölderlin bicentena-

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ry. In April he drowned himself in the Seine. Left on his desk was a biography of Hölderlin with a sentence underscored: "Sometimes this genius darkens and sinks into the bitter well of his heart."

SINCE PAUL CELAN'S death the work of understanding has intensified in Germany and America, and has helped to move *Todesfuge* beyond its author's misgivings about the poem as an aesthetic diversion. Recently a set of "poetic testimony on deportation and annihilation" was titled *Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland*. A West German Marxist has defended the poem, warning lest nowadays it be replaced in textbooks by mannered, subjective lyrics. German classes do still study it, paying more or less attention to the history, the memory, that compelled Celan to write.

I know more than a dozen English translations (and four Hebrew) of *Todesfuge*, from Michael Bullock, Clement Greenberg, and Jerome Rothenberg in the '50s to Christopher Middleton, Joachim Neugroschel, Michael Hamburger, and others. Still I see some point in attempting a new version, to keep on reaching for that message in a bottle. Every phrase, practically every word in this poem, broaches questions for the translator. What do you do, for instance, with *Meister*—a god, a champion, a "master race," skilled craftsman, Wagner's *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (which itself points to the 1935 Nuremberg laws and the postwar trials), a labor-camp overseer, a musical maestro, a rabbi? How do you convey the poem's overtones of Luther's Genesis, the Song of Songs, Jeremiah, Goethe, Heine? Through them alone, *Todesfuge* implies an indictment of Western, so-called Judeo-Christian culture.

I have taken the chance a fugue offers to render this poem gradually back toward Celan's original German, toward the mother tongue that was all he had left. I've refrained completely from translating *Deutschland*, because it's familiar enough to us in song and story and occurs simply this once in all Celan's poetry. In translating I also go back longingly again and again to Celan's own recorded voice—he read with "a cold heat," one friend said—to feel his rhythms, pauses, emphases, intense retards, caustic articulation, and even one excited mistake when he comes to "jab the earth deeper . . . sing up and play."

To approach *Todesfuge* in class, in these days of the war's long aftermath, I begin by playing a brief section from Bach's *Art of the Fugue*. (Did the camp orchestra have to play this? Did the commandant relax to it after work?) I play Bach first so as to steepen the irony the poem will bring, to make that irony more nearly intolerable. But the harpsichord's sinuous needle threadings wind their way and the music grows too good to stop. I should shut off the phonograph and start, "Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening." I can't. Why not let this music go on and on—two minutes, five minutes, the entire hour—and give us nothing but the piercing art of the fugue?

THE PSYCHE OF THE PRESIDENT

Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism
by Robert Dallek

(Harvard University Press, 221 pp., $16.50)

Robert Dallek's book on Reagan is a combination of biography and political narrative with analytical interpretation. Narrative and analysis are intertwined to a degree, but the emphasis falls on the latter. The factual narration is neither polemical nor particularly new. It relies mainly on secondary works and press reports, especially those of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Time* magazine, and quotes liberally from prominent columnists and commentators.

The biographical sketch of Reagan is unexceptionable and familiar. The protagonist is generously quoted on his own small-town Illinois boyhood with its "big green trees," its "dark red brick streets," and its "picture of bright-colored peace." There and at Eureka, a small-town college near Peoria, he absorbed traditional ideas about self-help, hard work, freedom, and morality. On graduation from college in 1932, however, young Reagan immediately stepped over a cultural divide from the old world of Protestant ethic into the new consumer culture. Seeking "some form of show business," he began with a five-year career as a radio sports announcer. He attributes that, and a five-year movie contract in Hollywood that followed hard on it, to lucky breaks rather than hard work.

The Hollywood career was based on grade B movies, fifty-three films in all. In only one of them did he play the villain, and he repeatedly expressed regret for that one. His usual role was that of the rugged hero rescuing the victims of villainy. When "adventure and action" roles began to elude him, he found compensation for his inner need to play the role of independent hero in public advocacy groups such as the Screen Actors Guild and the New Deal-related Americans for Democratic Action, the

"Rise up from the dust and put on your beautiful garments, oh my people." Isaiah

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United World Federalists urging world government, and antifascist organizations. In those years, Reagan later said, he had been "a very emotional New Dealer."

On discovering that some of the activist groups were infiltrated by Communists, Reagan broke with them and passionately embraced a new public rescuer's role as an anti-Communist crusader, with a starring part as witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee. In the meantime, his Hollywood career fell deeper into the doldrums in the early 1950s. After a turn at nightclub acting in Las Vegas, he signed a contract with the General Electric Corporation to host a series of half-hour television programs, to promote the image of G.E. and boost the morale of its employees. In this capacity he estimates he spent 250,000 minutes before microphones and visited 135 G.E. plants. The burden of his message was an attack on most of the social legislation of the twentieth century, from the progressive income tax to Social Security. It was not he who had changed, he vowed, but the Democrats. Big government was now the menace, not big business, and he was still defending individual freedom from the villain of concentrated power and foreign influence.

With the same rhetoric Reagan won his campaign for governor of California. After four years of an undistinguished first term, he anticipated his later Presidential tactics by campaigning for reelection with promises to clean up the mess in the capital—as if someone else had left it behind. Again he was against government, tax increases, and deficits. Yet the largest tax increases in the state's history occurred during his eight years as governor,and the budget more than doubled.

HE BEGAN running for President almost as soon as he was elected governor, again on the antigovernment issue, focusing this time on the Great Society federal programs. A fresh attraction was "a systematic transfer of authority and resources to the states"—now that, presumably, the menace of big *state* government was overcome. This would save $90 billion, balance the federal budget, and cut individual income taxes an average of 23 percent.

There is little to quarrel with in Dallek's formula for the basic paradoxes in Reagan's career. One is that "he is a contradiction in terms—a hero of the consumer culture preaching the Protestant ethic." Another is that he is a consummate expression of the other-directed personality glorifying the inner-directed man and his values of a bygone era. He has gained his status "largely through the manipulation of an image rather than traditional productive enterprise." His real self is the image on the screen, his shadow self the man in the White House.

SOME READERS will hesitate over the psychological explanation offered for "the core of Reagan's inner life" and "the driving force behind his evangelical commitment to individual freedom or personal self-control." According to Dallek, this stems basically from "his deep-seated fears of being as dependent as his father," a frustrated first-generation immigrant Irishman orphaned at the age of three, and addicted to drink. The son conceived a "horror of being in a helpless condition, beholden to someone else for survival," and "lived in fear of his father's uncontrolled behavior and understandably places an exaggerated premium on self-mastery in his own life and in the life of the nation." He idealized self-reliance and "like his mother, devoted himself to rescuing others, both in real life and on the screen." The suggestion at least deserves further thought.

As the subtitle, *The Politics of Symbolism*, suggests, the book seeks to find in nonrational forces an underlying explanation not only of the leader but of the Reaganite movement and the Administration as well. The author states his thesis guardedly:

> In my view some of the most significant forces influencing the Reagan movement are nonrational. While Reaganites may be seen in part as practitioners of traditional politics, pragmatists of the right operating out of rational self-interest, they should also be viewed as caught up in symbolic politics: their public goals satisfy psychological needs as much as material needs.

Stated in this manner as "an attempt to right the balance" between rational and nonrational motives, the author's purpose could hardly provoke challenge. In the process of correcting the balance, however, it is perhaps inevitable that the weight of emphasis falls on the nonrational. This raises a few questions, especially on the side of domestic politics.

Dallek acknowledges his indebtedness to Richard Hofstadter in his thoughts about symbolic politics. Hofstadter called it "status politics," but admitted that there might be "something misleading in the word 'status' " and that critics had suggested that " 'symbolic politics' will serve better." Dallek uses the terms interchangeably. As Hofstadter put it:

> Besides their economic expectations, people have deep emotional commitments in other spheres—religion, morals, culture, race relations—which they also hope to see realized in political action. Status politics seeks not to advance perceived material interests but to express grievances and resentments about such matters, to press claims upon society to give deference to noneconomic values.

He repeatedly emphasized "the fundamental importance of the distinction between status politics and interest politics." The latter he identified with periods of economic distress and the former with times of prosperity when people "feel free to vote their prejudices."

IN THE REAGANITE canon, symbolic or status issues bulk quite large, to be sure. What with the issues of abortion, school prayer, busing, federal funding of private schools, racial re-segregation, and all the moral, family, and ethnic values at stake, the politics of symbolism appeared to have reached a historic peak. But there are two anomalies. One was that the movement crested not in a time of prosperity but in the worst recession in half a century. Another is that the real and tangible triumphs of the Reagan Administration are not in the symbolic policies but in the crassest traditional varieties of interest policies and class issues: gross economic favors for the privileged, the powerful, and the well-to-do, and blatant deprivations for the distressed and the needy, for minorities, labor, and the hard-up.

Robert Dallek is perfectly aware, as he says, that "Reaganomics is a selfish program aimed at serving the interests of the wealthy—Reagan's class—at the expense of the less successful, less affluent." But it is with that program, not with the symbolic issues, that he has scored his successes. It is true that the "fundamental distinction" between interest policies and symbolic politics that Hofstadter stressed has been blurred, if not broken down, by the Reaganites. In effect they have combined them by effectively using the empty and unful-

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filled symbolic issues as a means to build a base of support for the major ends of interest politics. Under these circumstances it seems rather misleading—at least in the theater of domestic issues—to label the whole Reaganite movement "The Politics of Symbolism." A political movement that is bent on destroying half a century and more of social legislation, making restoration of it politically and financially unfeasible, and returning the country to nineteenth-century policies, requires a different characterization.

For the characterization of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy, including its military policy, however, the term "politics of symbolism" seems to have considerably more justification. Looking abroad it is difficult to find a place where Reagan's policies can be fully described as realistically designed to serve the national interest as traditionally conceived. Instead they serve predominantly symbolic interests and purposes, either in foreign or domestic eyes. Pragmatic, or if you will, selfish-interest purposes are usually secondary. Foreign policy scores a point, advances a moral, or illustrates a theory, often to the detriment of national interest. The symbol is the thing.

Anti-Sovietism is the organizing principle everywhere one looks. "The Soviet Union," declared the President, "underlies all the unrest that is going on," and without it "there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world." In a contest with the minions of absolute evil there is little room for compromise, whether in Latin America, the Near East, Europe, Africa, the Far East, or at Geneva. The consequence for American foreign policy is a diplomacy of ideology and what Dallek calls "ritualistic anti-Sovietism." There is much to his suggestion that Reagan's policy "arises as much from inner conservative tensions about government authority and social change as from any realistic understanding of Soviet aims and capabilities." The President and his followers see, Dallek observes, "striking similarities between a Communist Russia and a welfare-state America that they see as abandoning its traditional spirit of rugged individualism."

While Dallek may have overstressed the symbolic side and neglected to some degree the hard-nosed, class-interest achievements of President Reagan's domestic policy, the same cannot be said of his treatment of foreign policy. On the whole this is one of the more illuminating studies of the dominant American political figure of our times.

C. VANN WOODWARD

BIG BROTHER'S RED PENCIL

The Black Book of Polish Censorship translated and edited by Jane Leftwich Curry

(Random House, 480 pp., $24.95, $7.95 Vintage paper)

The affair began like a Le Carré novel, but its outcome makes one think more along the lines of Kafka and Orwell. In February, 1977, an inconspicuous Polish citizen arrived in Sweden by ferry for a two-week vacation. The only peculiar thing about him was his luggage; he brought along, in his pockets and in plastic bags hidden under his clothes, some six hundred pages of top-secret documents from the files of the Polish government's censorship office. The tourist's name was Tomasz Strzyzewski and he was an employee of the Krakow branch of the Main Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Public Performances. In other words, he was a censor who had had enough—a Polish version of Winston Smith. He had copied the documents during his two years in the censor's office. Once he had arrived safely in Sweden, he got in touch with the Poland-based human rights group KOR and requested that the documents be made public. KOR mimeographed the whole collection, provided an introduction, and distributed hundreds of copies among Polish bishops, academicians, writers, artists, and journalists. *The Black Book of Polish Censorship* was published subsequently in the West as well by the émigré publishing house, Aneks. As a result, an even greater number of copies made their way back into Poland, smuggled in by other tourists.

As I remember it (I was one of the KOR members who wrote the original introduction to *The Black Book*), the reaction of the first readers was horror—horror, however, which was unmixed with disbelief. Everybody who read the documents was genuinely struck by the extent and meticulous elaboration of the censors' guidelines and reports. The documents proved that censorship had literally every kind of publication under its control, from wedding invitations to circus posters to obscure quarterlies dealing with Mediterranean archaeology. At the same time, no one was really surprised. The iron grip of censorship had been tightening in Poland over the last few years, and even its absurdities were considered an element of everyday life. To draw on one of my own experiences, I was not particularly shocked when a censor confiscated my translations of John Donne and George Herbert in one literary weekly. The reason was not the seventeenth-century poets' incompatibility with communism, but the simple fact that I was the translator. My name had been included on a blacklist of Polish writers which was, of course, never officially revealed to me, though I was well aware of its existence. When in 1977 I found the original list among the Strzyzewski documents, therefore, I felt a certain degree of pride (I was in a good company) and a certain degree of horror (I realized how many of my famous colleagues were blacklisted), but I felt no surprise.

Thanks to Random House, *The Black Book of Polish Censorship* is finally available in English—a belated but highly welcome event. Even though the Strzyzewski documents cover the years 1974-77—that is, they derive from the middle phase of the so-called "Edward Gierek decade," an almost immemorial past by the standards of the recent Polish *accélération d'histoire*—the book may still be a revelation for the Western reader. It is invaluable as an inside view of the workings of Communist censorship. Moreover, in its English version *The Black Book* is not merely a collection of documents; it is actually Jane Curry's analytic study on censorship in modern Poland, sprinkled with extensive quotations from the Strzyzewski file in her translation.

In speaking of this, I cannot help but

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mention that Curry's commentary is not free from minor, though irritating, inaccuracies. She obfuscates, for instance, the circumstances of *The Black Book*'s first Polish appearance by failing to note KOR's role in it (KOR, by the way, was never an "underground organization," and it could never have "forced the regime to retreat from its plans to increase food prices" in June of 1976, because it was formed only in September of that year). The complex story of censorship in Independent Poland (1918-1939) is compressed into one paragraph and much oversimplified. It is not true that in Stalinist Poland "there were no purge trials where the defendants were put to death"; what Curry wanted to say was probably that in Poland, as opposed to other Eastern European countries, such trials had not affected the highest echelons of the party. Her remark that Julian Kornhauser and Adam Zagajewski's *Unknown World* (its title should rather be rendered as *The World Not Represented*) "was never actually made available for sale in Poland" is also inaccurate; the book was published and made available in Polish bookstores in 1974. Vladimir Bukovsky is hardly a "Soviet *artist* who *emigrated*." The weekly *WTK* was not an organ of the independent Catholic group Znak but, on the contrary, of the pro-regime organization Pax. Curry's sample of "intellectual weeklies, dealing critically with cultural, political and economic issues" in the 1970s is rather dubious, since it includes *Prawo i Zycie*, a decidedly hard-line Communist weekly, the only distinquishing feature of which was rabid anti-Semitism; its editor-in-chief, Kazimierz Kakol, could hardly be counted among "Poland's most respected . . . journalists and intellectuals."

ON THE WHOLE, the journalistic world of the '70s was much shadier than Curry imagines; although *The Black Book* offers many examples of censorship in numerous articles critical of the regime, we have to realize that in a typical Communist country every honest journalist has at least a dozen colleagues whose sycophantic articles need no censoring whatsoever. But even this equation oversimplifies reality. In fact, there are no black-and-white moral divisions among those who work for the censored media; there are, rather, varying degrees of compromise. This was finally understood, incidentally, by a large number of pro-Solidarity journalists after the 1981 crackdown: to remain morally untainted, they had to quit their jobs.

Apart from such errors of fact and judgment, however, Jane Curry's commentary and thematic organization of the documents does indeed help the reader to grasp the mind-boggling nature of totalitarian censorship. For, even though Poland in the '70s was more than once defined as "totalitarianism that, thank God, messed up," its censorship without doubt epitomized the essence of pure totalitarianism. Strzyzewski's escape has often been compared to another famous defection—that of Jozef Swiatlo, a colonel in the Polish secret police during the Stalinist period. But Swiatlo's confessions had revealed only simple, though horrifying, facts of lawlessness and torture. Strzyzewski's documents, over two decades later, dealt with infinitely more intricate matters of the concealment or distortion of truth. What is purely totalitarian about Communist censorship is, first of all, the very extent of that distortion and concealment. Not only all means of publication, but also every possible kind of publishable information, from world news to the metaphor of a surrealist poet, from economic statistics to a satirical cartoon, appears to be under the supervision of an army of censors.

The following is a sample of guidelines that every Polish censor between 1974 and 1977 kept on his desk and knew by heart:

> Until the results of the elections are announced, no figures on the number of persons entitled to vote should be published.
>
> In mentioning the capital of the GDR, the term "Berlin" should be used, to differentiate it from "West Berlin."
>
> Information concerning ceremonials and performances and other forms of commemoration of the Bicentennial being observed in the United States, foreign countries or our country may be reported only through the intermediary of PAP (Polish Press Agency). Information on this subject from other sources should be eliminated.
>
> All information concerning the participation of representatives of Israel at congresses, international conferences, or performances organized by Poland should be cleared with the GUKPPiW (Main Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Public Performances) leadership.
>
> No material concerning the Hippie movement in Poland may be permitted for publication if it expresses approval or tolerance, does not take the question seriously and so on. Only unequivocally critical material may be published.
>
> Information on direct threats to life or health caused by industry or chemical agents used in agriculture, or threats to the natural environment in Poland, should be eliminated from works on environmental protection.
>
> Numerical data on the nationwide increase in alcoholism should not be permitted for publication. Such data may be permitted to appear only in serious specialized publications. . . .
>
> It was discovered that harmful substances were being emitted from material used to seal the windows in School No. 80 in Gdańsk. Classes have been suspended in that school.
>
> Absolutely no information on this subject should be permitted.
>
> No information concerning Poland's export of meat to the USSR should be permitted. This prohibition is intended solely for the benefit of the censorship teams.
>
> All criticism of Marxism should be eliminated from religious publications. . . . All material critical of the religious situation in countries of the socialist community should be eliminated.

ANOTHER PURELY totalitarian feature of Communist censorship is its self-contained nature, which is combined with a highly complex internal structure. It is a state within a state, with its own secret rules, hierarchies, codes, and systems of controlling the controllers of the controllers. The Main Office is not only the Orwellian Ministry of Truth, but also the Kafkaesque Castle, self-contained and impenetrable from the outside. The above-quoted instruction, "This prohibition is intended solely . . .," means that in practice the author or publisher has no right even to know the regulation on the basis of which the work has been censored; besides, this knowledge would not help him because he does not have the right to appeal in any case. The Strzyzewski documents include guidelines as to what precisely "should not be permitted for publication," as well as periodic "Reports on Materials Censored" (reprints of eliminated texts, neatly arranged in thematic order and supplied with commentaries for the sake of party authorities and the censors themselves) and special analyses—to be studied by censors—of individual decisions, right or wrong, compiled by the Bureau of

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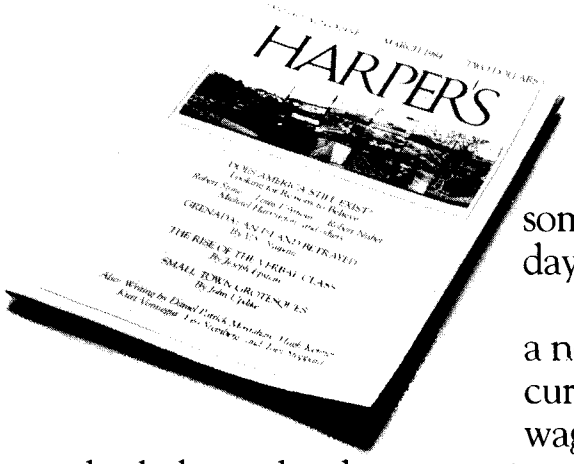

The new Harper's magazine asks you to do something that isn't terribly fashionable these days: think for yourself.

The Harper's Index, for example, presents a not-so-random collection of statistics both current and relevant—the number of wars waged in 1983 (41), the percentage of Americans who believe that heaven exists (77), the number of movie theaters in the United States (16,901) as opposed to the number of movie theaters in the Soviet Union (144,100). Read as a sequence the Index provides a kind of sounding of the spirit of the times. For those willing to listen.

Each issue also contains writing from people as various in their perceptions as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Kurt Vonnegut, Leo Steinberg and Tom Stoppard. As well as readings from publications as miscellaneous as Pravda, The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Variety and Le Monde. We do this to give you an indication of what's being said and done in places you don't have access to. What you do with it is up to you.

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Second-Level Control, i.e. the censors of the censors. All of this serves to create a hermetically closed circuit of information; those in the know are exclusively censors and their party superiors.

Under these schizophrenic circumstances, the oddest ideas seem logical. One of the most untamed of Polish writers, Stefan Kisielewski, made a habit in the '70s of writing his most important statements in a deliberately outrageous way, so that they would undoubtedly be censored and thus would make their way into the classified bulletins. This seemed to be the only way to tell at least the leaders of the country—assuming that they read these bulletins at all—that Poland was headed toward disaster.

As we know today, even these desperate measures did not help much. The popular explanation that the Communist leaders are ruining their countries simply because "they don't know," "they are misinformed," "they are cut off from the real world," is only half true. In fact, they schizophrenically *both* "know" and "don't know." The real information is at least partly available to them, if only in the bulletin of "materials censored" which they find every second week on their desks. At the same time, their access to this information may as well have no impact whatsoever on their policies. In totalitarian thinking, there is no objective truth and no objective reality; only those facts and objects exist which are allowed to exist by the ruling power. As Jan Kott once observed, "[I]t's as if censorship as a system brings to its logical conclusion the post-structuralist principle that reality is only a message, which can be transformed at will according to definite rules." Information about, say, an epidemic, is crossed out by the censor's red pencil not because the regime fears mass panic; it is deleted because the epidemic *was not supposed to happen*. The totalitarian rulers resemble some poets in this unconditional faith in the creative/destructive power of the word. Any phenomenon, be it the deterioration of the economy, the publication of a dissident author's book, industrial pollution, or an airplane crash, can be magically made nonexistent if no public mention of it is allowed (even though real people stand in lines, read underground books, suffer from pollution and die in air crashes). Inversely, the wishful thinking of the leaders can magically become reality if the mass media, statistics, posters, and pop songs all project an image of a flourishing, unanimous, clean, and fail-safe country (even though, again, real people stand in lines, read underground books . . .).

This is, at least, the totalitarian rulers' dream. Censorship is necessary simply in order to let them keep dreaming. And the most frightening thing is that here, in the less schizophrenic part of the world, we most often discuss the "views," "personalities," and "policies" of these dreamers as if they were wide awake, as if they really knew and wanted to know what is going on in their countries. In fact, their Castles are as impenetrable from outside as ever before. There could be no better way to commemorate both Kafka and Orwell in 1984 than the publication of the *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK

Stanislaw Baranczak, a Polish author who came to the United States in 1981, is now a professor of Polish literature at Harvard.

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HAIL THE HILL

Congress and the Common Good
by Arthur Maass

(Basic Books, 273 pp., $18.95)

No part of our national government is so open to observation yet so difficult to comprehend as Congress. Arthur Maass, longtime professor of government at Harvard, has with remarkable insight and understanding imposed structure and pattern on the Byzantine ways that Congress, especially the House of Representatives, actually operates.

But Maass goes beyond description and analysis to argue that Congress and the American political system generally fulfill the requirements of constitutional democracy—not a fashionable view. Congress and the other branches of government are not, he asserts, simply arenas for horse-trading among conflicting interests, as so many have recently claimed. Rather, our political institutions serve to promote continuing discussion, encouraging both individuals and groups to work toward the well-being of the wider society. We must, accordingly, judge both Congress and the executive by how effectively they resist particular interests and advance "the common good" of Aristotle's *Politics*. Maass's uncynical evaluation of the role of Congress is persuasive, in large part because he knows so much more about how Congress really works than do many academics, journalists and—dare one say it?—even some Congressmen.

Unquestionably the most important legislative body in the world, Congress is also the most complicated. Unlike the British House of Commons, which by the imperative of parliamentary systems must vote for what the executive wants—it is significant that in Britain only the executive is called "the Government"—the American House and Senate are not, and were not intended to be, instruments of the White House.

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Through the separation of powers, the Founding Fathers deliberately fragmented political authority.

Beyond constitutional arrangements, the fact of decentralized, undisciplined parties means that a President cannot feel sure of support from a Congress controlled by his own party; indeed, party leaders in both the House and Senate must constantly search for votes from among their own partisans. In addition, reforms over the last decade and a half in the House of Representatives have, by weakening full committee chairmen and strengthening subcommittee chairmen, further diffused power there. And other factors have contributed to the dispersal of influence on Capitol Hill: the proliferation of internal caucuses, single-issue pressure groups and political action committees; the rise of television; the soaring costs of campaigns.

MAASS CUTS through this jungle to fashion paths that help observers of Congress find their way. What do Congressional committees, party leaders, individual Congressmen really do? What are the relationships between the whole House of Representatives and its committees? How do the authorization, appropriations, and Congressional budget processes work? How do the executive and legislative branches influence each other?

Among many myths that he punctures, Maass helpfully contests the prevailing notion that committee staffs have mushroomed so much in recent years as to wrest decision-making away from elected Senators and Congressmen. That there are substantially larger committee staffs now than in the early 1970s is clear, but it is also true that the workload of the committees has grown enormously with the expansion in government activities.

The education subcommittee I chaired for ten years, for example, had within its jurisdiction the National Arts and Humanities Endowments, museums, libraries, early childhood development, education of handicapped children, educational research, vocational rehabilitation, and a number of other programs. The subcommittee staff consisted of three professionals and two secretaries—a modest number, considering the subcommittee's wide span of legislative and oversight responsibilities. This small staff had to organize hearings, keep abreast of activities in

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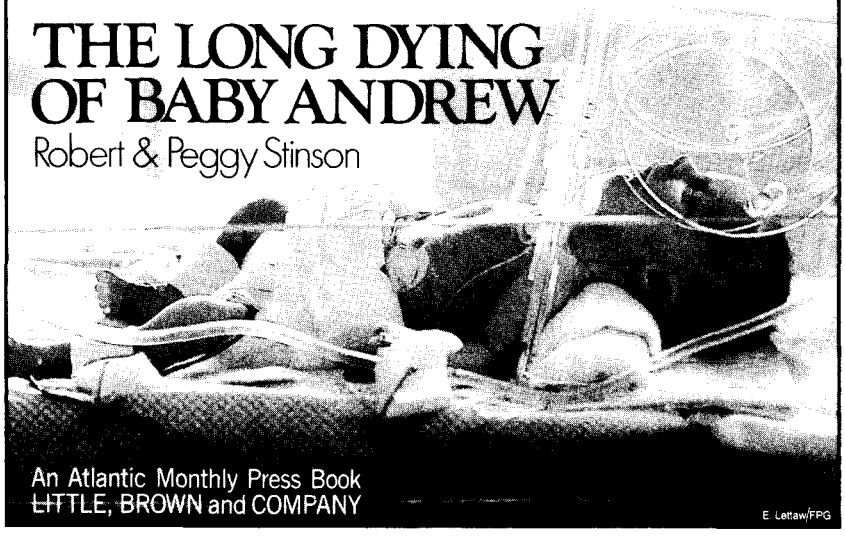

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the executive departments and agencies within the subcommittee's ambit (nearly all with much larger staffs), as well as handle the inquiries and petitions of interest groups and individuals. Maass also rightly notes that Congressional staffers are not civil servants. Their loyalties, like those of White House appointees, run to the chairmen who hired them, and there is little evidence that Hill employees stray far from the policy preferences of their patrons.

How *does* Congress contribute to a political process that focuses on the broad interests of the nation, "the common good"? For one thing, the legislative committees produce alternatives to the President's proposals, an activity basically impossible in a parliamentary system. In the absence of strong political parties, Senators and Representatives and the subcommittees are also incubators of ideas and creative policy, an indispensable function in a country as large and diverse as ours. So, too, when it comes to oversight, committee members develop expertise that enables them effectively to criticize and challenge the executive. I often found my colleagues on the Education and Labor Committee far more knowledgeable about the problems being considered than were the Administration officials who appeared before us, many of whom were newcomers to government and the issues.

Maass is especially effective in describing the connections between process and outcome, between system and substance. He shows, for example, how the Congressional budget, instituted a decade ago in an effort by Congress to produce sets of spending and revenue priorities independent of the President's preference, can, if the votes are there on the Hill—as they were in 1981—be co-opted by the White House and turned to Presidential advantage. Indeed, Maass warns that, contrary to the intentions of the authors of the 1974 statute that created the Congressional budget, there could develop "an informal alliance" among the budget committees, the Congressional Budget Office, appropriations committees, Office of Management and Budget, and the President—all "representing fiscal conservatism"—against the authorizing committees and the departments they monitor, which "represent a demand for greater spending."

One dilemma that characterized most of my time in the House of Representatives was the tension between the desire of Democratic members for "stronger leadership," on the one hand, and "more democracy, accountability and openness," on the other. As majority whip, I found my Democratic colleagues often pressing me to press Speaker O'Neill to work more vigorously on behalf of measures those members favored. Yet some of the same Congressmen would vehemently resist when urged by the Speaker and the whips to vote "with the leadership" on other bills the members found politically uncongenial. "That vote will hurt me in my district" was the common response.

Maass understands that such behavior reflects the schizophrenia of the American electorate. We want stronger defense, more social services, lower taxes, and a balanced budget. We should, therefore, not be surprised when our elected representatives look for ways to cope with these crosscutting pressures. Maass explains, for instance, how legislators vote to pass bills authorizing the creation of programs their constituents favor and then turn around to vote for appropriations bills that cut spending for the same programs.

In recent months we have heard voices complaining that there are so many obstacles in our system, of

HESITANCY

For a start here's hesitancy
played on a breezy afternoon
at the Kyoto Zoo by an
ostrich met with the offer
of a pretzel: a pink two-toed
stalking to the fence, there to pin
upon the quailing child
the enlarged, enraged glare
of the born disciplinarian,
while all the while the neck's
spiral tube's atremble,
for the bird, too, is fearful . . .

Through hesitancy we are placed
in kinship with the scarred rat
as it hungrily sniffs at
the broken cellar window;
elsewhere, with the chary
candy-striped spider as
with an evenhanded
sinister dexterity
it sidesteps fatefully
toward that wobble in the web
that may mean prey, or
may mean predator.

A joint appeal in all
things subject to a contrary
pull—as in the very
faint, loose-lipped whistle
of a warming kettle, or that
blackened buried moment when
a cloudburst's certain

but still nothing, not a drop,
spills, or the hairline
fissure's inchmeal venture
down the flume's granite wall—
links our comical, our pretzel-

necked ostrich, so far from
its home, with the rupturing
perilous push of a king-
side pawn: a mere one-square
advance along the board's
periphery, and yet a move
hazarded only upon
considerable mulling
in the miniaturized viscera
of a grandmaster computer.
For pause links with pause,
or will at least for those

yearning to feel that these
things, too, go with some minimal
reluctance, don't just tumble
—so much deadweight cargo—
down and down in heedless
projectable collisions, forever
locked in the straitened chute
of strict causality . . . but know
in every pressing second
second thoughts, and a doubt
turned wishful: *if we are not free,*
we would like to be.

BRAD LEITHAUSER

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which an undisciplined Congress is paramount, that a President can no longer govern effectively. In this view, the chief executive is prevented by Congressional inaction and obstruction from even bringing his legislative program to a vote, let alone mobilizing majorities necessary for policy change. Some of these critics, most of whom have worked for Presidents and few on Capitol Hill, suggest that we should recast our political system along parliamentary lines, thereby enabling the President more easily to have his way.

I HERE SIMPLY note that Congress readily approved both President Reagan's major initiatives of 1981—a huge increase in military spending and a huge cut in taxes—and that we are now looking at $200 billion-plus budget deficits as far as the eye can see. In my view, the country would be better off today if Congress had been more obstructionist three years ago. The Founding Fathers knew what they were doing.

The scholarly literature on Congress has, not surprisingly, undergone a number of revisions over the years. In the 1960s, political scientists like Richard Neustadt and James MacGregor Burns examined the process of governing through the prism of the Presidency and saw Congress as a secondary, though troublesome, participant. This body of work was characterized by a focus on the personalities of officeholders—especially of Presidents—and, as the test of leadership, on their skills at manipulating the symbols of politics. In the 1970s and 1980s Congress has become a laboratory for the behavioralist. Intent on uncovering the "realities" of legislative decision making, political scientists now explicate role theories and construct voting models. At times, the techniques of quantitative measurement are valuable, elegant even, but the larger questions—who wins, who loses, and with what impact on public policy—can go unanswered. If earlier scholars, in disdain of Congress, ignored it, some more recent ones dissect it to death.

With this major study of Congress, Arthur Maass returns to the tradition of one of the first students of modern American government, Woodrow Wilson. For the emphasis here is on Congress as an institution—how it organizes itself, goes about making decisions, and gets them implemented. Such an approach both provides a context in which to understand the conduct of individual political actors and allows for meaningful comparison with the performance of other institutions in our system.

There are two minor corrections I must make in this splendid book. On page 156, Maass speaks of the "lower House"; on page 238, of the "upper chamber." Wrong. In the American Congress, there is no lower or upper House; the House of Representatives and Senate are co-equal. If Professor Maass is uncertain on this point, his own Representative in Congress, one Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., will inform him.

JOHN BRADEMAS

John Brademas, president of New York University, was a member of Congress (Democrat of Indiana) for twenty-two years and, from 1977 through 1980, House majority whip.

BRIEF REVIEW

Dark Horse: A Biography of Wendell Willkie by Steve Neal

(Doubleday, 369 pp., $17.95)

"The Republican Party," said Harry Truman, "either corrupts its liberals or it expels them." In 1940, it nominated one for President: a Wall Street lawyer, utility company executive, and former Democrat from Indiana named Wendell Willkie. Steve Neal, a political reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, has written an engaging, thorough narrative of Willkie's life and the improbable convention triumph which propelled him into the national spotlight. "In a time for heroes," Neal argues, "Willkie was the man of the hour. . . . [H]e became the conscience of American politics."

Willke repudiated the twin pillars of pre-war Republicanism: hatred of the New Deal, and isolationism. Recognizing that the Great Depression had made government intervention in the economy inevitable, he urged his party to accept President Roosevelt's reforms. And while other Republican candidates re-

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sponded to the Nazi conquest of Norway and France by attacking F.D.R.'s "warmongering" plans for a draft and for military aid to Britain, Willkie declared that "the lights of liberty are going out in Europe today one by one. The only thing this fellow Hitler respects is strength." Willkie's heterodoxy vexed party bosses, but it electrified the Republican rank and file. "Willkie Clubs" sprang up all over the country, and club members packed the party's Philadelphia convention, winning over uncommitted delegates with their incessant roar of "We Want Willkie!"

Still, Neal's own account suggests that Willkie can't quite be ranked as the "hero" and "conscience" of his era. In the early 1940s, which were indeed a time for heroes, *Roosevelt* was the man of the hour; he had more than enough courage and principle for most Americans. (Although Willkie came closer to beating F.D.R. than any of the President's three other opponents, he still lost by 5 million votes.) It's also true that much of the Presidential "boom" that sent Willkie's Gallup poll rating from 3 percent in May 1940 to 44 percent during the July convention was generated by a flood of pro-Willkie coverage in Henry Luce's magazines. And, as Neal points out, Willkie reversed his position on the war in the closing days of the 1940 campaign, joining the critics of F.D.R.'s defense program in a bid to recapture isolationist Republican votes. Willkie was forced into this desperate act of expediency by his own errors in campaign strategy; his worst decision was to refuse help from the Republican party organization and to rely instead on the amateurish Willkie Clubs and his own blustery personality. Perhaps one lesson of Willkie's career is that principle alone is not enough; mavericks who lack political savvy can end up behaving like the party hacks they scorn.

Despite his 1940 flip-flop, Willkie was genuinely committed to internationalism and liberalism. In 1941, he again bucked the Republican orthodoxy and endorsed Roosevelt's Lend-Lease program. F.D.R., recognizing that Willkie's support had been crucial to the passage of both Lend-Lease and the 1940 draft law, made his former opponent a special diplomatic envoy during the war; Willkie's highly publicized journeys to London during the 1941 Blitz and to the Soviet Union, China, and the Middle East in 1942 boosted Allied unity and morale. The trips also inspired him to write *One World*, a plea for international cooperation which sold 2 million copies in 1943. Moreover, Willkie was one of the few major wartime political figures to advocate civil rights for blacks.

Willkie's brand of liberalism ultimately proved to be more than the Republican Party could tolerate. In 1944 Republican leaders turned on their one-time standard-bearer, thwarting his bid for another nomination and anointing Thomas Dewey instead. Unable to corrupt Willkie, the party decided to expel him, rejecting one of the first Republicans to insist that the American government should support both reform at home and freedom abroad.

CHUCK LANE

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

The High Walls of Jerusalem: A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the British Mandate for Palestine by Ronald Sanders (Holt, Rinehart and Winston). A clear and comprehensive account of one of modern diplomacy's most influential documents. (Reviewed 3/19/84)

I Wish This War Were Over by Diana O'Hehir (Atheneum). A first novel whose people and places are unforgettably vivid. (3/19/84)

Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic, by David Bromwich (Oxford University Press). A major study of England's most restless Romantic. (3/12/84)

The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade, by Harvey Klehr (Basic). The last word on the American Communist movement's ties to Moscow. (3/5/84)

Family Portrait with Fidel: A Memoir by Carlos Franqui (Random House). A former confidant of Castro sheds light on the origins and the failures of the Cuban Revolution. (2/20/84)

The Wall Jumper, by Peter Schneider, translated by Leigh Hafrey (Pantheon). A novel about dislocated lives on both sides of the Berlin Wall. (3/5/84)

Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times, Volume I: 1885-1933, by Peter Heyworth (Cambridge University Press). A groundbreaking account of one of the great musical figures of the century. (2/27/84)

Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age, Volume Three: Dean Swift by Irvin Ehrenpreis (Harvard University Press). A thorough treatment of the writer's last years. (2/13/84)

A Late Divorce, by A. B. Yehoshua, translated by Hillel Halkin (Doubleday). A wise Israeli novel, under the sign of Faulkner. (3/12/84)

An Interrupted Life: The Diaries of Etty Hillesum, 1941-1943 translated by Arno Pomerans, edited by J. G. Gaarlandt (Pantheon). The spiritual and sensual reflections of a young Jewish woman who died in a concentration camp. (3/26/84)

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

profitability of the industries concerned, unemployment, plant closings, "give-backs," increases in imports; and eventually a greater sense of realism on the part both of the labor force and the electorate. Liberal thinking, while objecting to the dislocation and suffering caused, has largely failed to address the problem squarely, and certainly failed to provide any believable alternative.

"Technology" as an incantation may sound good, but who can possibly expect U.S. technology to be consistently superior to the rest of the world? If U.S. auto workers (receiving, between pay and fringe benefits, $21-$23 per hour, I believe) were willing to accept the U.S. blue-collar average ($13-$15), how would the cost of building a small car compare with Japan, and how many more auto workers would be at work?

These awkward and unpleasant questions will not disappear if ignored. Mr. Reich makes no effort to suggest how this very substantial cost disadvantage (naturally most heavily felt with small vehicles) can be handled, or how any industry segment suffering from such a handicap can be an attractive in-

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vestment. Common sense suggests that if liberals cannot provide acceptable and effective alternatives, they should at least not try to impede the marketplace reaction. Such delays merely increase the total cost of the cure.

D. H. E. DICCONSON
Durham, North Carolina

NORTH'S NAMIBIA

To the editors:

Things are bad enough in northern Namibia, as I can attest from an October visit there, without your pseudonymous James North attributing something like genocide to South African security forces ("Namibian Nightmare," TNR, February 13). His charge is so palpably out of whack that the South African government will easily refute it, in the process obscuring serious human and political problems.

It is true, as Mr. North suggests, that South African body counts after the Angolan incursions look suspicious. Of the total six thousand "SWAPO deaths" reported by the Defense Force as of late January 1984, most were incurred in Angola and many were civilians—some, I am told, even Cubans. But I believe the simplest explanation of the paucity of wounded taken is the best: the South Africans don't bother to round them up, and many of them flee.

In northern Namibia itself, the Namibian Council of Churches reports torture and several killings but nothing that hints of mass murder. That could not happen without ministers or local journalists being told and without some publicity in Windhoek and Johannesburg English-language newspapers.

There is a substantial security force presence in Ovamboland and in Kavangoland, but nothing like the one hundred thousand troops Mr. North mentions. Including all units, whether military or police, I estimate the total forces in Namibia to be less than twenty thousand, of whom less than ten thousand are stationed in the north.

The rest of Mr. North's article is unexceptionable in its pessimistic characterization of South African political attitudes about a Namibian settlement. The negotiations, not imagined genocide, must be the focal point of our concern for the Namibian people. Misguided U.S. policy has contributed marginally to the South African confidence in its military raids into Angola and in its assurance that it need not fear any challenge to its control of Namibia. Whether we can develop a policy to change South African behavior and bring some momentum to the Namibian deadlock demands serious consideration.

JOHN SEILER
Fayetteville, North Carolina

Mr. North replies:

I don't fear that no one will notice South Africa's brutal war in the north of Namibia. My fear is that the conflict is remote, and that the press will continue to be legally restrained and that the international community will continue to be distracted by Pretoria's seeming willingness to negotiate. Under these conditions, it is not "palpably out of whack" to worry that the kind of atrocities that Mr. Seiler agrees are already taking place will increase to an even more horrifying level without provoking world attention and protest.

TRB, *from page 4*

years. In July 1983, McKean told *Post* reporter Charles Babcock that Meese was "doing all right" on the interest payments. Meese refused to talk, but White House Counsel Fred Fielding said that, as he understood it from Meese, payments on the loans "have been made in a timely fashion." In fact, no payments had been made at all. Meese now says that's what he meant: no payments were due, none were made—all in a timely fashion. Payments started the next month.

What's wrong with this picture? Journalistic convention requires a Newtonian approach to political skullduggery: for every bribe, there must be an equal and opposite payoff. Meese's defenders point out that the payoffs have been pretty meager. A Postal Service governor gets $10,000 a year. This misses the point. What's wrong is not any particular transaction, but the general mise-en-scène: the world of sleazy money our rectitudinous President and his California buddies operate in. It's one thing to hand out minor U.N. posts to this crowd like party favors. Attorney General is something else.

Correction

In last week's review of *The Diaries of Etty Hillesum*, the name of the camp from which she was deported was misspelled. It should have read Westerbork.

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OXFORD DIARIST

Moral Differences

AT FIRST BLUSH Caspar Weinberger would seem to have more to lose than E. P. Thompson in debating the motion, "That there is no moral difference between the foreign policies of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R." The fact that the Secretary of Defense agreed to face the spiritual and polemical leader of the peace movement showed a certain amount of courage. An unreconstructed Anglophile, Weinberger got approval for his February 27 visit to the Oxford Union over the objections of the State Department, which views foreign policy, not surprisingly, as its terrain. Weinberger's undeclared campaign to replace George Shultz as Secretary of State would not be helped by defeat in the Union's daunting parliamentary setting. But E. P. Thompson also had a lot to lose. What if the leader of the "war movement" were to make the consummate rhetorician sound shrill? Over drinks and dinner before the debate, Weinberger and Thompson eyed each other cautiously and exchanged a few forced pleasantries. They were both white with fear.

TO COMPLICATE THINGS, Thompson's principal undergraduate partner was a brilliant 20-year-old history student named Andrew Sullivan, a right-wing Tory who shares virtually everything with Margaret Thatcher except her fondness for Ronald Reagan. To people like Sullivan, the American "empire" will never match the standard set by its British predecessor. Sullivan had originally arranged the meeting of Thompson and Weinberger for last May. Then the British general election intervened, and Conservative Defense Minister Michael Heseltine scuttled the debate—to the chagrin of Thompson, Weinberger, and Sullivan. In his opening speech Sullivan lashed out at Heseltine: "Last spring, Mr. Heseltine, you rang me and said, 'This is not going to be one of your favorite phone calls.' Well, sir, this is not going to be one of your favorite debates." Sullivan's world view diverges sharply from Thompson's. While Thompson strongly protested the coming of cruise missiles to Britain last November, Sullivan celebrated with Beaujolais Nouveau, which coincidentally arrived on the same day. As Sullivan picked apart the Reagan Administration's affinity for repressive regimes, his acceptance of traditional moral categories—so much bourgeois moralizing, as far as Thompson is concerned—appeared to chasten Weinberger. "History has not provided you with a special mission," Sullivan said, causing Weinberger to avert his gaze. "You don't have a copyright on freedom, and neither does the U.S.S.R. Both sides have been responsible for immorality in the world."

THOMPSON'S REMARKS ranged from Britain's Official Secrets Act to the alleged immorality of deterrence. His thick mane of gray hair whipping to and fro, he resorted to some of his usual tricks. For instance, he likes to blame Soviet oppression on Western rhetoric: "Every time Mr. Reagan opens his mouth, another prison door closes," he said. He also restated the Soviet "encirclement" theory, according to which the United States, because it interferes in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union all over the world, is the most imperialist country on earth. So Weinberger had a fund of sympathy by the time he stood up to speak. He needed only to tap it.

IN THE END, Weinberger "prevailed" (to use one of his favorite words) by a vote of 271 to 232, though his performance invites a spate of inverted commas all the same. He "debated" on the issue, even though his speech sounded more like a high school civics lecture than anything else. (Government is consent of the governed . . . unalienable [sic] rights . . . elections every four years . . . blah blah blah.) He "defeated" Thompson, although it was the presence of about a hundred Americans in the debating chamber which proved decisive. He "rose to the occasion," even though he failed to answer the central questions put to him by Andrew Sullivan: Does it matter to the victims of immoral, American-sponsored dictatorships that the U.S. electorate could have forced its foreign policymakers to act otherwise? Does an immoral act become any more moral because we could have chosen, but didn't choose, to act morally? Many of those in the audience—including Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, daughter of the executed President Ali Bhutto and a former Oxford Union president just released from house arrest by General Zia—had trouble discerning the difference.

THESE CRITICISMS of Weinberger are not meant to feed the growing anti-Americanism afoot in Europe. Quite the contrary: I spoke on his side of the motion, borrowing from the arguments frequently expressed in this journal. The moral difference between the U.S. approach to NATO countries and the Soviet approach to Warsaw Pact countries is obvious; the moral difference between the U.S. approach to Latin America and the Soviet approach to Eastern Europe is somewhat less obvious but still significant. It is not morally trivial that the Soviet Union has only dictatorships as allies, with the possible exception of India. Those who want the United States to eschew its global responsibilities and return to a kind of splendid isolation are guilty of moral retreat. But the Reagan Administration often verges on moral recklessness. It spends too much time worrying about the distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism and not enough time pressing for the evolution from dictatorship to democracy. As a result, Weinberger groped unsuccessfully for a response to Sullivan's question about the moral difference between America's S.O.B.s and Russia's S.O.B.s. He took refuge in the domestic democratic process without even conceding that repressive allies are an unpalatable necessity for a world power. Now, using American democracy as a moral justification for support of foreign dictatorships is extremely disingenuous, as most undergraduates know. Apparently Caspar Weinberger doesn't. He might have pointed to sincere, if inconsistent, efforts by the United States to foster democracy since World War II; he might have pledged himself to push the process forward wherever possible. But he didn't, and the possibility that he might become Secretary of State offers little comfort to the morally serious at home or abroad.

LAURENCE GRAFSTEIN

Laurence Grafstein, a former TNR staff writer, was recently elected president of the Oxford Union.

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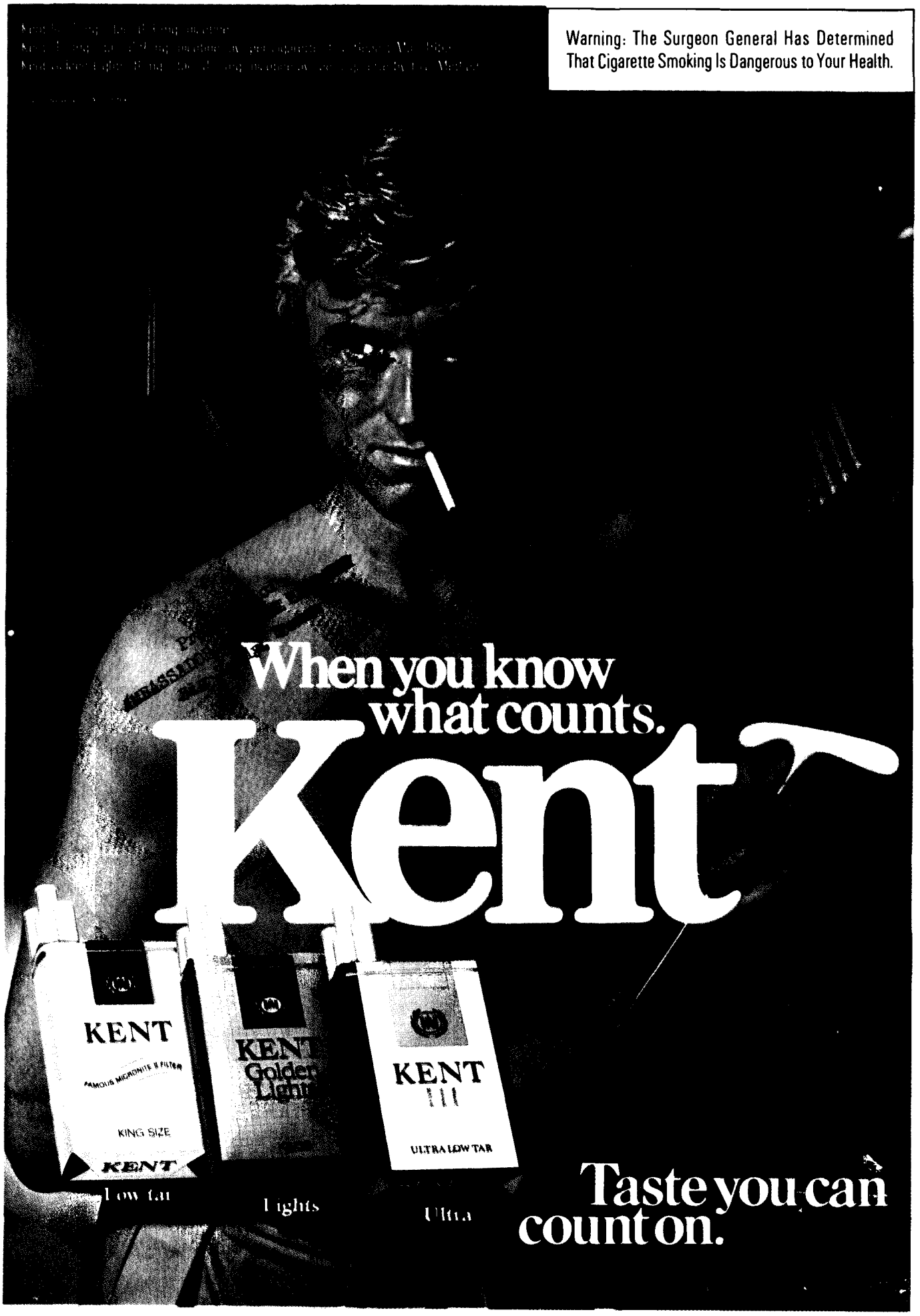

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